THIS NIGERIAN ART IS PRESENTED
GOVERNMENT NIGERIA
ON THE OCCASION OPENING OF THE PASSENGER TERMINAL
INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT
BRUARY 1967

140 well-appointed rooms. 20 suites.
Restaurant. Private dining suites.
2 bars. Ballroom.
Full catering service.
Conference room. Spacious lounges.
Car park. Garden.
Central air-conditioning throughout.

Private bus meets all planes
at Ikeja Airport.

MAINLAND HOTEL

2/4 Denton Street · P.O.B. 2158, Lagos, Nigeria
Phone 46101 · Cables: Mainland Lagos

Nigeria Magazine

March 1967 · 92

'Nigeria' Magazine is sold at 2s a copy. Annual subscription in Nigeria is 8s post free. Overseas subscription rate is U.S. $2, elsewhere 12s including postage by surface mail. Payments made by cheques outside Lagos should bear the endorsement 'Commission to Drawer's Account' with the full signature of the Drawer thereto.

All enquiries about advertisement should be directed to the Business Editor, 'Nigeria' Magazine, Exhibition Centre, Marina, Lagos, Nigeria.

The Editor is always glad to consider original, signed articles. While every care will be taken, the Editor cannot be held responsible for the loss or damage of material submitted to him.

'Nigeria' Magazine is published by the Cultural Division of the Ministry of Information, P.M.B. 12524, Lagos.

© NIGERIA MAGAZINE 1967

Editor: T. O. A. ADEBANJO

Business Editor: L. ALLAGOA

Asst. Editor: A. K. METTEDEN

Offices: Exhibition Centre, Marina, Lagos.

Telephone: 23134

Telegrams: Ednigmag, Lagos.

COVER: *The Oba of Benin with attendants by Ben Aye in ebony*

Contents

Lagos Art Galleries, 2

Ganuwa—The Walls of Kano City, 19

Ife: The Home of a New University, 40

Ijo Origins and Migrations—II, 47

The Mystery of the Buried Bronzes, 55

A Miscellany, 74

LITERARY SUPPLEMENT

Books, 79

African and European Dance, 87

The Arts in the New Africa, 92

Time, 97

Poets' Corner, 98

Readers' Letters, 104

Contributors, 104

LAGOS ART GALLERIES

THOUSANDS of passengers and visitors to the new ultra-modern passenger terminal of San Diego's International Airport, (in the U.S.A.) can see on display a traditional Nigerian work of art. It is one of the symbolic presents from many countries of the world on the occasion of the opening of the terminal last month. The Nigerian work of art is 'The Oba of Benin with attendants by "Ben Aye" in Ebony', and it is the gift of the Government of the Federation of Nigeria.

The sculpture (the cover page picture of this edition of *Nigeria* Magazine), was finished in 1961 and previously exhibited at the Independence Building, Lagos, during Nigerian Independence celebration anniversary of 1962. It was also exhibited at the Wind Symphony Orchestra at Pennsylvania, U.S.A. Exhibition in 1963.

This gift of work of art was bought from a Lagos Art Gallery. There are today a few art galleries in the Federal capital as well as other cities and towns of Nigeria. This is a development which augurs well for the advancement of Nigerian art and culture. These galleries are bringing to the limelight young Nigerians who are helping to show the world Nigeria's rich heritage in the field of art and culture. Many outstanding works of art are finding new homes at these art galleries, providing a veritable market for the works of Nigerian artists, painters and sculptors and helping to provide a new tourist attraction all over the country.

YORUBA TEENAGER' *Oil on Canvas by Afi Ekong*

Mr Tayo Aiyegbusi

Miss Afi Ekong

Mr Felix Idubor

In Lagos alone there are more than half a dozen art galleries. Who are the brains behind these ventures? And what can the visitor to Nigeria get to buy there? This *Nigeria* Magazine survey covers Idubor Gallery of Art, The Bronze Gallery, Mbari Mbayo Gallery, De Idehen Gallery and the Onobrakpeya Studio.

Felix Idubor is perhaps one of the best known Nigerian sculptors. It is not surprising that he is one of the first pioneers of art galleries in Nigeria. His dream of a home for his many works of art came true in 1966—and it is a house of beauty for some of Nigeria's best works of art.

Idubor Gallery of Art at Kakawa Street, Lagos, is an imposing house with an architecture which dates back to years. It is one of the very few houses of Brazilian architecture still left to grace old Lagos. Inside, Felix Idubor houses his valuable additions to Nigerian treasures.

The house itself has been remodelled but still fascinates with the more than 100 years old original Brazilian design. It has symmetry, elegant front windows and doors portraying classic influences.

Since Felix Idubor moved into his Kakawa Gallery, he has not relaxed in his efforts to make this a full house. More works of art have been transferred from his studio at Onikan, Lagos.

Mr B. Onobrakpeya

Mr Festus Idehen

Idubor Gallery at Kakawa Street, Lagos

(Right) Cement Fondu-Warrior by Festus Idehen

Front view of the Bronze Gallery at Campbell Street, Lagos

Bronze castings have been added from Idubor's Foundry at Benin to the enrichment of the culture inside.

But this gallery does not house the works of Felix Idubor alone. It also has on display collections of budding Nigerian artists who have no other place to send their works.

And Felix Idubor has this to say about his aim and objectives: 'I have taken the plunge to ru an art gallery befitting the City of Lagos in orde to arouse in the authorities the need for buildin a National Art Gallery to retrieve our loss of artis ic consciousness and to show art as an integr part of our life.'

He produced the casket covering the Souvenir Album of the Royal tour photographs presented to Queen Elizabeth II by the High Commissioner for Nigeria in the United Kingdom in 1957 and designed and executed the works shown on the doors leading to the Co-operative Bank in Ibadan. He was commissioned by Maxwell Fry, the famous British Architect, well-known for their Building of Chandigarh—the new Indian capital city of the Punjab—to design and carve the entrance doors for the Bank headquarters.

He also carved the main entrance doors of the new extension to the *Iga Idunganran*—the Palace of the hereditary Obas of Lagos. These consist of three panels with the Obas depicted enthroned side by side with other characters. Felix also carved some of the wood panelling and the impressive range of doors which form the Foyer of the National Hall, and the panel for htc Throne.

He has recently completed a work commissioned by the Central Bank of Nigeria, Benin City. He also carved the bank's entrance doors and designed and executed the iron screens depicting Benin Obas' State Swords displayed at the bank's gate.

Felix Idubor is also the proprietor of the NIGERIAN ART AND CRAFTS CENTRE. His IDUBOR GALLERY OF ART is at 29 Kakawa Street, Lagos.

The Bronze Gallery at 39 Campbell Street, Lagos, is the successor of the Gallery Labac which

'ADMIRATION' *by Aiyegbusi*

(*Left*) *Oil painting* 1965 BOLI WOMAN *by Onobrakpeya* (*Above*) 'THREE MASKS' *by Aiyegbusi*

[illegible] Relief [illegible] by Onobrakpeya

A Yoruba Palm-wine Seller by Felix Idubor

The De Idehen Gallery at Moshalashi Street, Obalende, Lagos

opened in December 1961 for use as an outlet for the production of all artists.

Today, it has, among other things, fifteen artists regularly contributing their works to the Gallery.

The Gallery, which seems to be a misnomer [illegible] what it houses, is owned and managed by Miss Afi Ekong and contains bronzes, ethnographic objects, old and contemporary batiks, carvings, paintings, prints and sculptures. Works of famous artists like Bruce Onobrakpeya, Simon Okeke, Susanne Wenger, Festus Idehen, Ayo [illegible], Ben [illegible], [illegible] Brothers, George Bandele, [illegible] [illegible], Ben Osawe, Ayo Ajayi and [illegible] are prominently featured there with heavy emphasis on bronze and wood-carvings—especially Benin and Yoruba images. Included in the collection are five rare pieces dating to as far back as the Fourteenth Century.

Afi Ekong is almost a household word in Nigeria and she needs little or no introduction. Born in Calabar in 1930, she was educated at Christ Church School and Duke Town School, Calabar, and at Wusasa, Zaria. She received her professional training as a painter and fashion designer at Oxford College of Arts and Technology (1951–3), St Martin School of Fine Arts, London (1955–7), and spent a year studying history of costumes at the Central School of Arts, Holborn, London.

She held one-man exhibitions in Lagos in 1958, [illegible] and [illegible] and in Buenos Aires, Argentina in [illegible], and took part in joint exhibitions in Lagos, New York, Germany and London. For her contribution to the advancement of African women she was decorated by President Tubman of Liberia with 'The Star of Dame Official' of the Humane Order of African Redemption'.

Lino Bronze Relief 1966—BEAUTY AND WILD LIFE *by Onobrakpeya*

Bronze of Oba Akenzua of Benin by Ben Obasuyi

A member of the Nigerian Institute of Management and of many women's organizations, Afi Ekong was Honorary Secretary of the Federal Society of Arts and Humanities, Lagos. She has a life interest in the promotion and development of Nigerian art and culture.

DE IDEHEN ART STUDIO

Hidden in a quiet yet unpretentious Obalende suburb, at the corner of Moshalashi and Keffi Streets is the De Idehen Art Studio. Festus Idehen, whose fame has spread abroad is a carver. There Festus is making a quiet yet growing contribution to a new world of Art Galleries in Nigeria.

Born in Benin City in 1927, he was educated at C. M.S. School, Benin and St. Saviour's Academy, Onitsha. On leaving school, he worked with the U.A.C., Warri for about three years and then taught in Benin until he moved to Lagos in 1956.

Descended from a family of wood-carvers he was apprenticed at the age of nine to his grandfather who was the official wood-carver to a succession of Benin Obas. On his arrival in Lagos, he resumed his art studies at Yaba College of Technology. Mr Idehen who has held three one-man exhibitions in Lagos (1957), Western Germany (1959) and Ghana (1966) studied bronze casting in Munich (West Germany) in 1964 under a West German Government sponsorship. He has had commissions for sculptures from the Chase Manhattan Bank in Lagos, the Eastern Nigeria Development Corporation for its Presidential Hotels at Enugu and Port Harcourt, the Government of Liberia and the Ghana Fishing Company. At present he is working on sculptures for the Lagos City Council. Mr Idehen sculpts in wood, marble, cement and fibre glass with resin. His hobby is picture-going.

ONOBRAKPEYA'S STUDIO

Bruce P. O. Onobrakpeya lives and works in the top floor of a three-storey building in Iseyin Street near Palmgrove, Ikorodu Road, a place not easily reached by visitors.

His studio could do with a little more space. It is jammed tight with Art materials and one wonders how any work can be produced there. Conspicuous among these materials is the newly

A Benin Village Chief (Benin) in his traditional robes by Felix Idubor

Cement Concrete cast—Mask of Wisdom by Festus Idehen

installed 70 *cm* roller Etching Press standing on a strong wooden table. Both on the walls of the studio and in his local exhibition centre are finished and unfinished paintings, prints, and Lino-bronze reliefs, altogether presenting an atmosphere such as can be found in Museums.

Mr BRUCE ONOBRAKPEYA was born of Urhobo parents in Agharha-Otor near Ughelli in the Mid-West in 1932. He received his primary and secondary education at Sapele and Benin City.

From 1953–6 he was an Art Teacher in the Western Boys' High School, Benin City, from where he moved to the Ondo Boys' High School the following year.

To improve his artistic talents he entered the Nigerian College of Technology, Zaria (now Ahmadu Bello University) in 1957 to study Fine Art. He obtained a Diploma in Fine Art (specializing in Painting and History of Art) in 1959. He made his debut into fame in 1959 when he held his first one-man exhibition of water-colour paintings, Lino cuts and Fabric prints in Ughelli, Mid-West Nigeria.

The Nigerian Arts Council in 1960 commissioned him together with Uche Okeke and Demas Nwoko to paint murals for the Arts and Crafts Stands of the Nigerian Independence Exhibition.

In the same year he took part in group exhibitions of Contemporary Nigerian Art in the Independence Exhibition, Contemporary African Paintings at Ibadan and Nigerian Art in Germany arranged by the Art Council of the Federation of Western Germany.

1961 saw him attending the first Seminar in Visual Art organized by the Department of Extramural Studies of the University of Ibadan, completing thirty-eight illustrations for Cyprian Ekwensi's *An African Night's Entertainment*, and holding his second one-man exhibition of Paintings and Prints in the Exhibition Centre, Marina,

Singing Birds by Tayo Aiyegbusi

Lagos sponsored by the Nigerian Arts Council.

A group Exhibition of Art from Africa at the Helps-Stokes Fund arranged by the Harmond Foundation took him to New York in 1962 in which year also he did fourteen illustrations for Chinua Achebe's *No Longer At Ease* and got his postgraduate Art Teacher's Certificate. He closed the year by attending, as an observer, the first International Congress of Africanists in the University of Ghana, Legon, Accra.

He was appointed Art Teacher at St. Gregory's College, Lagos in 1963. The same year he completed a *96-foot 6¾-foot* mural for the University of Lagos and sixteen illustrations for *Babalola's Iwe Ede Yoruba.*

Two of his prints were bought by the Duke of Edinburgh at the Commonwealth Exhibition of Paintings, Sculptures, Prints and Crafts held in London and Cardiff in 1965.

Not satisfied with teaching art, his experiments in new techniques resulted in 1966 in a new development called Lino-Bronze Relief of the success and future of which Mr Onobrakpeya is very much optimistic.

His sold works can be found in the University of Lagos and others can be seen in the Bronze Gallery at Campbell Street and Idubor Gallery of Art, Kakawa Street, as well as the Mbari Mbayo Gallery at Ikorodu Road.

The MBARI MBAYO Art Gallery at 23 Ikorodu Road, Yaba was opened in October, 1964 by His Highness Oba Laoye, the Timi of Ede, and owes its origin to Mr Ulli Beier and Mr Omotayo Aiyegbusi. 'Tayo Aiyegbusi runs the gallery.

The Gallery is open to all African artists of outstanding qualities and a plan is afoot to exhibit works of non-African artists in order to keep abreast of art in the world.

Items exhibited include sculptures, paintings and prints, some outstanding crafts which reflect the cultural background of the country and Mbari Publications. The Gallery is open from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. daily except Sundays.

The aim of the Gallery is to bring to limelight the aesthetic ability, technical competence and professional integrity of Nigerian artists as well as artists in other parts of Africa whose works are qualified to be exhibited in the Gallery.

Mbari's activities of course, are not limited to exhibitions only. It organizes many other activities like discussions, conferences, and classes in ar and reproduction of drawings and paintings.

Mr TAYO AIYEGBUSI left school with Senior Cambridge School Certificate in 1945.

He entered the Federal Survey Department th following year where he was trained in map pro duction and employed as a draughtsman for si years.

His overseas trip came in 1952 when the In stitute of Internal Education invited him to parti cipate in a world-wide art programme in th U.S.A. On that visit he learnt also Serigraph reproductions which enabled him to set up th first colour-printing business in Nigeria.

His second overseas which took him to the S Martin's School of Art, London, and the Londo School of Printing in 1954 where he studi graphic design and method of printing obtaini a National Diploma in Designs in 1957.

Back in Nigeria he worked in the Weste Nigeria Ministry of Information, Department Graphic Arts till 1961 in which year he was elect a Member of the British Society of Industr Artists. Also in 1961, Tayo Aiyegbusi establish his Design Productions West Africa from meagre savings when he was a Civil Servant.

He has done many book illustrations as well cover designs for books of Nigerian authors

GANUWA— THE WALLS OF KANO CITY

By H. L. B. Moody

KANO has probably a longer and more fully traceable history than any other of the cities of Nigeria, and its name, along with that of Timbuktu, is familiar to educated people throughout the world, even those who have had no special reason for studying West Africa in detail. For nearly ten centuries, a city of Kano, significant in size and importance, has centred round the twin iron-bearing hills of Dalla and Goron Dutse. It was in the fifteenth century A.D., about a century before Shakespeare was celebrating his own country as 'this royal throne of Kings. . . .

> This fortress built by Nature for herself
> Against infection and the hand of war'

that Kano, under its twentieth Emir, Mohammed Rumfa, achieved its greatest pre-eminence in Hausaland. In later times, amid 'the perpetual march of balance of tides of forces' Kano was raided, besieged and occasionally conquered; sometimes by its chief rivals among the other Hausa states, especially Zaria and Katsina; sometimes by other immigrant peoples who were on the move in the Western Sudan, the Kwararafa, the Kanuri, the Zamfarawas, the Gobiri, the Fulani, the Ningi, the Maradi, to say nothing of the British! Through all these vicissitudes, the essential life of Kano as a centre of trade and communications continued with little dislocation. Until the end of the nineteenth century, it prospered as the principal distribution centre for the trans-Saharan caravan routes; during the twentieth, as the chief collection centre at the rail-head of the Nigerian Railway network. Now that many forms of communication are airborne, Kano again plays an important role as the first touching-down point on many trans-Saharan air-routes, from Europe and North Africa to Ghana, to Lagos and to the Congo.[1] Even during the inter-communal 'disturbances' of 1966 it was reassuring to many whose faith in the future had been shaken to see the almost uninterrupted disappearance of the great groundnut pyramids as successful efforts were made to keep the economy running.

Claims, which the present writer is not qualified to assess, are also made that Kano has long been the intellectual and cultural centre of Hausaland. While this would no doubt be disputed by champions of some other Hausa cities, it is certain that centuries before the celebrated *Dan Hausa* (Hans Vischer) began to introduce western education at Kano in 1910, scholars and teachers from many parts of the Arabic-speaking world congregated and sojourned at Kano. Most famous among these was probably Sheikh Muhammad Al Maghili, who, in the reign of Mohammed Rumfa, was guided to settle at Kano with his company of scholars and missionaries because there, according to tradition, he found that the local earth matched the sample he had brought with him on his journey from the holy city of Medina.

However, for those who wish to study the historical, political and economic importance of Kano, plenty of sources are available.[2] The object of the present article is to give something of the attention they deserve to one of the great glories

[1] Nor should we forget the intrepid trans-Saharan motorists, whose heavily-laden, travel-stained vehicles can be seen in Kano most weeks of the cool season.

[2] *E.g.* E. W. Bovill, *The Golden Trade of the Moors;* S. J. Hogben, *The Emirates of Northern Nigeria;* W. K. R. Hallam, '*The Great Emporium*', *Nigeria* Magazine, No. 81, June 1964.

of Kano, which must surely rank high among the Seven Ancient Wonders of West Africa—*Ganuwar Birni*, the City Walls. When Sir Frederick Lugard took over administration of Northern Nigeria, he estimated[1] that there were forty walled towns within thirty miles radius of Kano, and a total of one hundred and seventy in the whole province. It seems evident that Kano was at the very centre of the great Hausa wall-building culture. The Walls of Zaria and Katsina may in some ways have rivalled those of Kano in extent, strength and boldness of conception, but at Kano alone is it still possible to see any extensive remains of these remarkable works of pre-industrial, communal earth-moving enterprise. Undoubtedly, more attempts have been made in Kano than elsewhere to treasure and safeguard the Walls, though considerably greater efforts will be needed in the near future if they are to be adequately preserved for posterity.

IT is interesting to look at the various surveys of the City Walls which have been made. From the more accurately-drawn of these, we see that the general shape of the city is like an inverted heart with the apex pointing almost due north. It should be explained that by the 'City', we are referring to the area enclosed by the Walls, even though at least two-thirds of this area is still in use for agriculture: much of modern Kano lies outside the Walls to the east, and is usually referred to as the Township, including the commercial and residential areas of Fagge, Sabon Gari, Gwagwarwa ('Brigade'), Tudun Wada, Bompai and Nassarawa.

In describing the Walls in any detail it is necessary to have some fixed points of reference, and, apart from the usual points of the compass, we shall use the names of the thirteen historic gates and the three recent ones,* as they are given in the survey of 1962. If we begin in the south-east corner and proceed in a clockwise direction, the Gates are as follows:

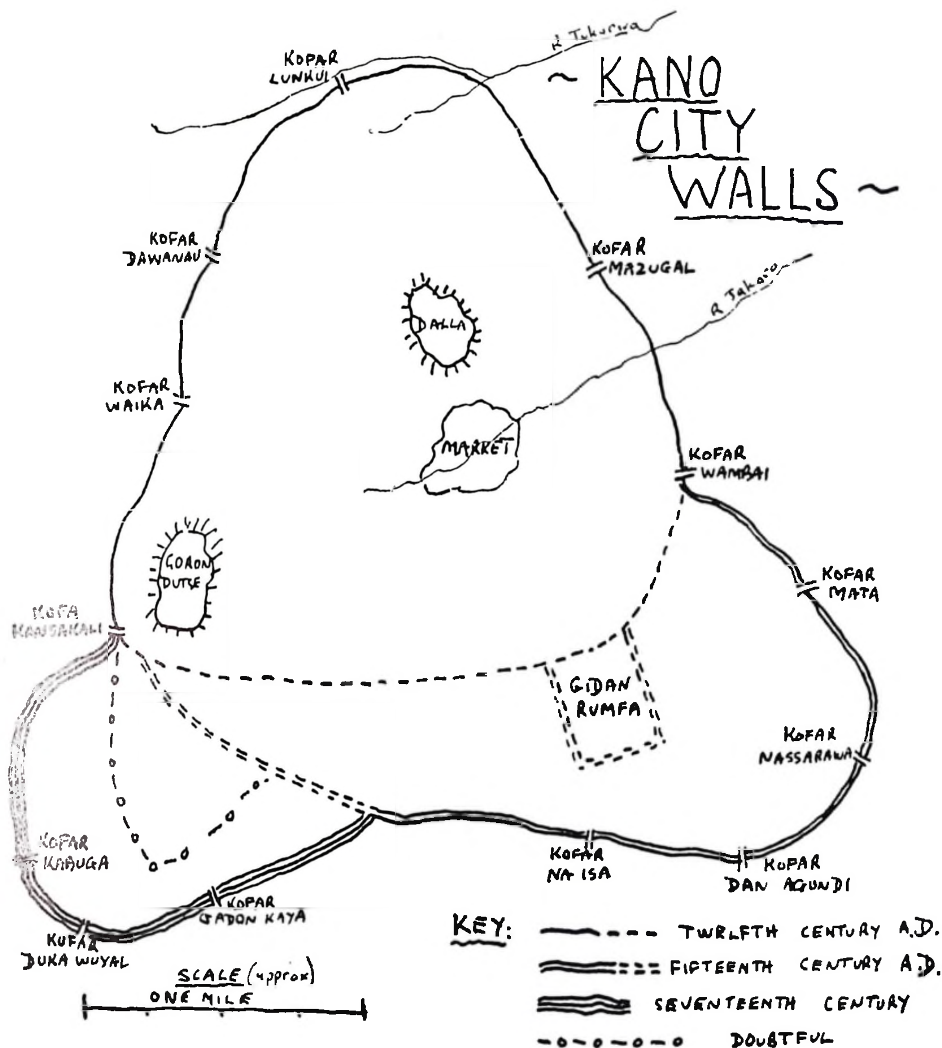
Kofar Nassarawa,
*Kofa *Uku*,
Kofar Dan Agundi,
Kofar Na Isa,
Kofar Gadon Kaya,
*Kofar Pampo,
Kofar Duka Wuya,
Kofar Kabuga (the most westerly),
Kofar Kansakali,
Kofar Waika,
Kofar Dawanau,
Kofar Lunkui (the most northerly),
Kofar Mazugal,
*Kofar Jakara (or Sabuwar Kofa),
Kofar Wambai,
Kofar Mata.

It is possible to circumnavigate the Walls of th City by car, and the perimeter which is no tarred except for about four miles on the wester side, is never more than about fifty yards from th outside of the Wall, except where diversions a required because of the 'borrow-pits' betwee Kofar Lunkui and Mazugal, and again betwee Kofar Mazugal and Kofar Wambai. A far bett way of appreciating the grandeur and extent the Wall, however, is on foot, and in fact the whol of the perimeter Wall provides a fine and fairl manageable walk except for some sections betwe Kofar Gadon Kaya and Kofar Lunkui, where th vegetation and undergrowth which have sprea from the adjacent Forestry Reserves have covere the Walls with an impenetrable growth of brambl and thorn bushes; and some sections north Kofar Mazugal, where the Wall runs precipitousl between dark and sinister 'borrow-pits', full water at all seasons of the year, which demand th steadiest nerves and the surest foothold especiall if a breeze is blowing. It may be suggested that n inhabitant, or visitor, can be said to know this Kan unless he has made this circumnavigatory journe perhaps more than once, though there are n many times of the year when the whole expeditio could be carried out comfortably on a single da and it is indeed best attempted in convenie sections. The journey for those who make it i fascinatingly varied, taking the traveller in tu

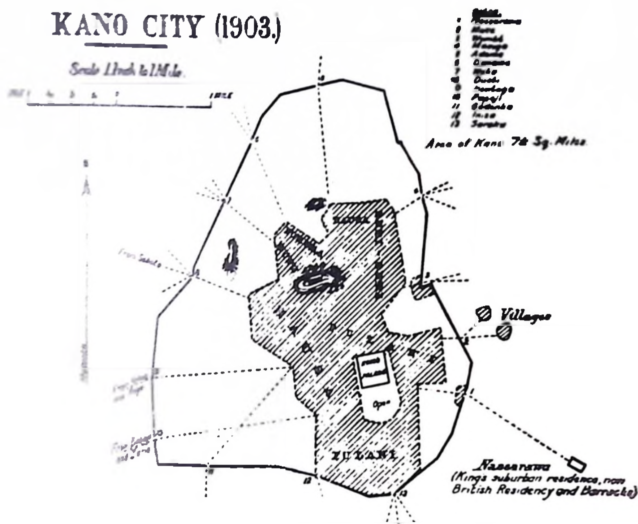
[1] *Colonial Reports—Northern Nigeria*, 1904.

* Marked by an asterisk in the above list.

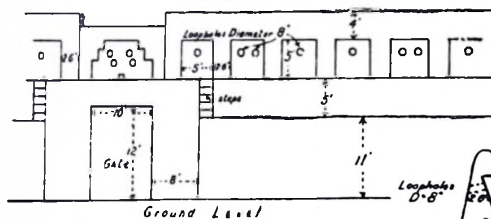
* Marked by an asterisk in the above list.

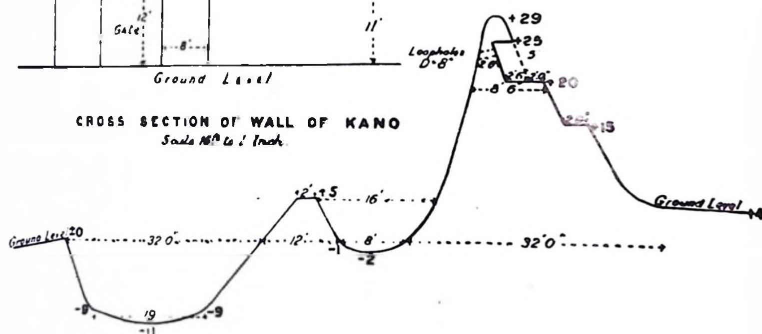


~ KANO CITY WALLS ~
R Tukurwa
KOFAR LUNKUI
KOFAR DAWANAU
KOFAR MAZUGAL
R Jakara
DALLA
KOFAR WAIKA
MARKET
KOFAR WAMBAI
GORON DUTSE
KOFAR MATA
GIDAN RUMFA
KOFAR NASSARAWA
KOFAR KABUGA
KOFAR NA ISA
KOFAR DAN AGUNDI
KOFAR GADON KAYA
KUFAR DUKA WUYA
KEY:
TWELFTH CENTURY A.D.
FIFTEENTH CENTURY A.D.
SEVENTEENTH CENTURY
DOUBTFUL
SCALE (approx)
ONE MILE



INTERIOR ELEVATION OF WALL OF KANO.
Scale 16 ft to 1 Inch.





Colonial Office Reports –
Northern Nigeria, 1903

through almost every aspect of Hausa life—from the dignified and boldly-patterned farms; the busy labour of the borrow-pits, including the communities of professional washermen whose laundry spread out to dry in the sun adds a great deal of colour to the scene; the schools, colleges and other institutions in different parts; the burial-grounds, some of them being ruthlessly excavated for building material; the unsavoury back-side of city life, where no water-borne sanitation has yet been installed for a population of some 300,000; the vast expanses of the open pleasure- and prayer-grounds; with always the twin towers of the great Mosque, and the twin hills of Dalla and Goron-Dutse at the centre, appearing in continually changing relationship.

Before we proceed on a journey of this kind, however, two special aspects of the Walls need to be clarified. When we speak of 'the Walls', this seems to suggest something complete and homogeneous. In fact, the Walls comprise a considerable variety both in dimensions and in state of preservation.

In the first place we tend to think of 'the Walls' chiefly as the outer perimeter Walls with their eleven miles of extent. As we see them today, they were not, of course, built all at the same time, and we must now make a short excursion into Kano history. The main sources of evidence available to us for this include the following:

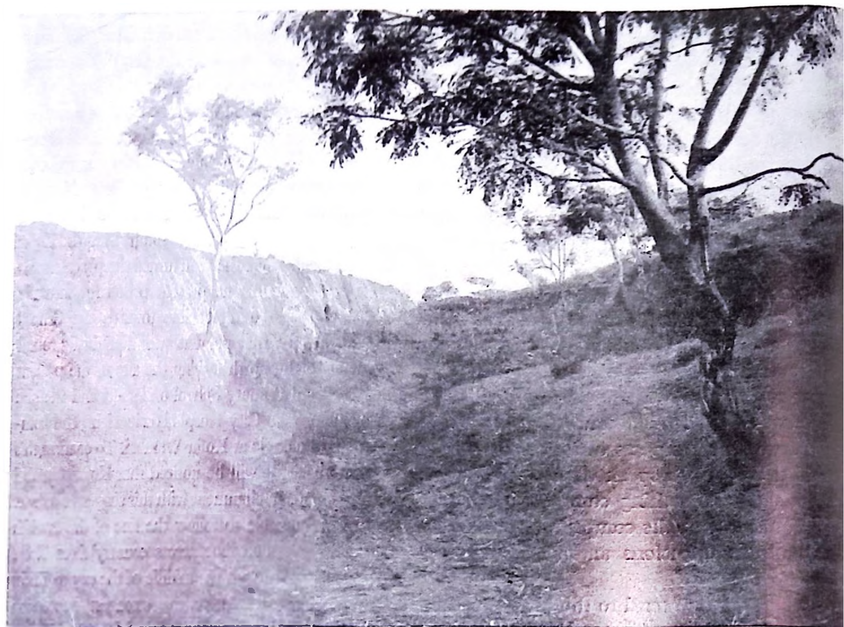
1. *The Kano Chronicle*, a record of Hausa history, written down in Arabic between 1883–93; translated into English by H. R. Palmer and published in his *Sudanese Memoirs*, 1928. This is usually taken to include authentic oral tradition; and later accounts of Kano history have followed it closely.
2. Maps, especially the 1962 'Kano City Plans,' produced by the U.S. Army Map Services; available from the Survey Department, Kaduna.
3. Photographs from the aerial survey at 5,000 feet on which 'Kano City Plans' were based.
4. Direct observation of walls and ditches on the ground itself.

Collating all these, it is possible to identify three principal wall-building periods.

The first was in the twelfth century A.D., in the reigns of the third and fifth Emirs, Gijinmasu and Jusa. At this stage the City Walls already enclosed the twin hills of Dalla and Goron-Dutse, the former of which was the residence of Barbushe, priest-chief and propitiator of the God, *Tchunburburai*. The Walls built at this period followed the line which still exists from Kofar Mazugal, north to Kofar Lunkui, turning round in a big semi-circle and running south towards Kofar Kansakali. There the Wall turned sharply eastwards past the site of the present prison for mentally defectives in a direct line towards the Central Mosque. At that point it swung gradually round again to the north leaving the site of the present Masalachi Primary School on its left and the site of the present City Hospital on its right, and completed its circle at Kofar Wambai. To confirm this hypothesis, it will be noticed that Kofar Wambai still stands in alignment with this suggested course.

It is possible to follow the line of this twelfth century Wall on foot 'across country' from Kofar Kansakali through the middle of the city to Kofar Wambai, and receive the strongest impression that this was where the original Wall lay. Except near Kofar Kansakali, where there is still a low mound beside the shallow ditch, there are few traces of a Wall, except at about three places; but the continuous line of waterways, crossed only at a number of points by definite causeways, suggests a major purpose in their original excavation more overriding than local needs for building material.

The second phase of building occurred in the fifteenth century, in the reign of the celebrated Emir, Mohammed Rumfa. It was he who conceived the idea of building *Gidan Rumfa*, the present Emir's Palace, which was of such imposing proportions that there was no room for it in the City, as it then was. So the Palace, which covers some thirty acres, and a Mosque adjoining (the predecessor of the present modern building) were built at the south-east, and a new Wall was built to enclose it, passing along the present line from Kofar Wambai to Kofar Mata, Kofar Nassarawa, Kofar Dan Agundi and Kofar Na Isa. A little way west of the latter, at about Milestone 3 on the



Old inner moat (16th century) south of Kofar Kansakali

Challawa Road, the Wall, instead of turning to the south-west (left) as the present perimeter Wall does, continued straight ahead and gradually circled north-west to join the older Wall at Kofar Kansakali.

The third great time of building was in the reign of the twenty-eighth Emir, Mohammed Nazaki. The work was undertaken by one of his principal chiefs, the Wambai Giwa, who, so we are told, because of ill health, was unable to follow the Emir to battle in his wars against Katsina, and built some extensions to the Wall to please his master on his return. (There is certainly a fascinating historical novel to be written about this period—with 'built-in' film rights, too; in the reign of the next Emir, Kutumbi, the Wambai Giwa was turned out of office for being too powerful). The section of the Walls built by Wambai Giwa is the present perimeter Wall which runs from Kofar Kansakali past Kofar Kabuga, Kofar Dukawuya, Kofar Gadonkaya, and joins the fifteenth century Wall at Milestone 3.

Thus, in addition to the perimeter Walls, which include developments from three different periods, it is possible still to trace the sections which became obsolete as the result of later extensions. Some of these have almost 'returned to the earth as it was'; others are still quite conspicuous. These were well known to Heinrich Barth when he visited Kano in 1851 and 1854, though an archaeological expert, Mr P. B. Adamson, observed incorrectly in 1950 that 'All remains of the ancient Wall noticed by Barth have completely disappeared.'[1] The obsolete sections are, firstly, the old twelfth century Wall running from Kofar Kansakali, eastwards to Kofar Wambai; and secondly the old fifteenth century Wall running from Kofar Kansakali to Milestone 3. In addition to these, however, there

[1] *Antiquity* (No. 96), December 1950.

is another section of 'doubtful origin' for which no certain explanation is available.

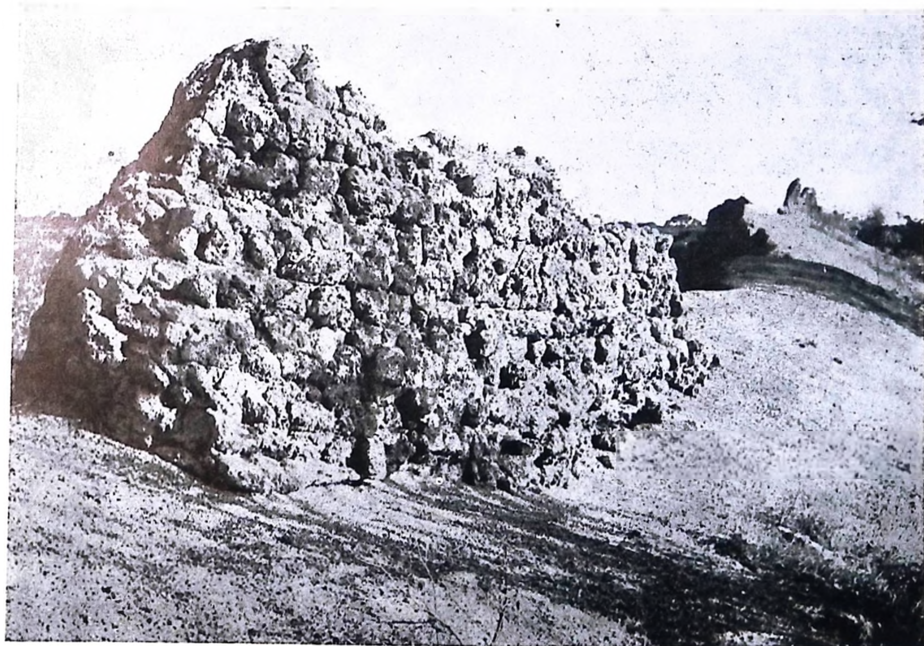
This, the most dramatic of the inner Walls, runs directly south from Kofar Kansakali in a bold purposeful way, clearly aligned as if to reach Kofar Kabuga. The outer ditch accompanying this section of wall is still remarkably well defined: much of it seems to have been cut clearly out of the living laterite rock (*marmara*, H.) for the edges on both sides are sheer and vertical, in some places for at least 8–10 feet. Since the ditch presumably holds water well, a good deal of earth has been filled in from the surrounding fields, and guinea-corn is systematically cultivated inside the ditch, here about 30 feet wide. The Wall in this section, though nowhere so sharply crested as the perimeter Wall, is massive, clearly defined, and at some places rises to 30–40 feet above the bottom of the ditch. If we follow this rampart southwards, however, it does not connect up with the outer perimeter Wall near Kofar Kabuga, but about 500 yards short of it turns sharply to the east and can be followed until it comes gradually closer to the older Wall of the twelfth century, though its further course has been obscured by the building of houses.

It has been indicated by Mr W. K. R. Hallam,[1] that this section was built in the sixteenth century, at a time when Kano was being hard-pressed by the Kwararafa, to such an extent that the inhabitants fled to Daura, but later reoccupied the city and perhaps rebuilt some of the Walls.

This hypothesis has some force, but at least two thoughts cast some doubt on it. This section of Wall comes to an unusually sharp corner at the point nearest to Kofar Kabuga, which seems entirely out of keeping with the general character of wall-building which usually proceeds in broad sweeps.

[1] In *The Nigerian Field*, Vol. XXXI, No. 4, October 1966.

Sections of parapet superimposed on earlier mounds showing construction by tubali

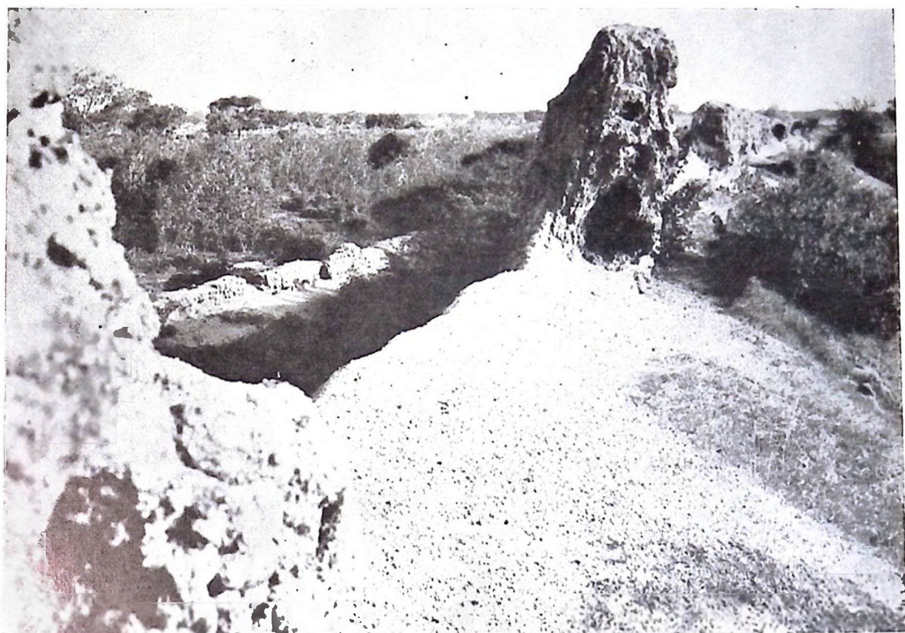


Secondly, the clear outline and depth of the moat is so marked that it appears in even better preservation than the perimeter Wall itself. Possibly this section was never an outer Wall, but was built as a second line of defence, either at the time of Wumbai Giwa, or at an even later period. On 29th October, 1885 Paul Staudinger, a German traveller on his way to Sokoto, made the following comment on entering Kano from Zaria, which may lend some force to this hypothesis:

> 'In no other town in Hausaland have I seen a similar fortification. These smooth clay walls probably twenty metres high, flanked by a protective moat approximately fifteen metres deep, as well as the formidable and sinister gate-house, called forth an almost unnerving feeling in the traveller who had to trust himself within them. Led by the King's messenger we passed through the entrance. A short distance away extended *a second wall of fortification*, though only on this side, pierced by a gateway'.

A further assumption to be guarded against is that 'the Walls', either now or at any time, were completely uniform, or that, for example, the cross-section so carefully measured and recorded by Lugard's surveyor in 1903 applied then to all parts of the Wall. My conjecture is that probably at no time were the Walls in a uniform condition of construction or maintenance. Evidence in the form of their surviving condition at present, as well as of photographs from the beginning of the century, certainly indicates that enormous labour, skill and imagination were given to the building of the southern and western parts of the Wall, and this must be attributed to the energy of the Fulani Emirs who needed to protect Kano against threats from the direction of Zaria or, as the country was opened up to foreigners, from encroachments by European colonizers moving up from the south.

Borrow-pit on outer side of Wall near Kofar Mazugal

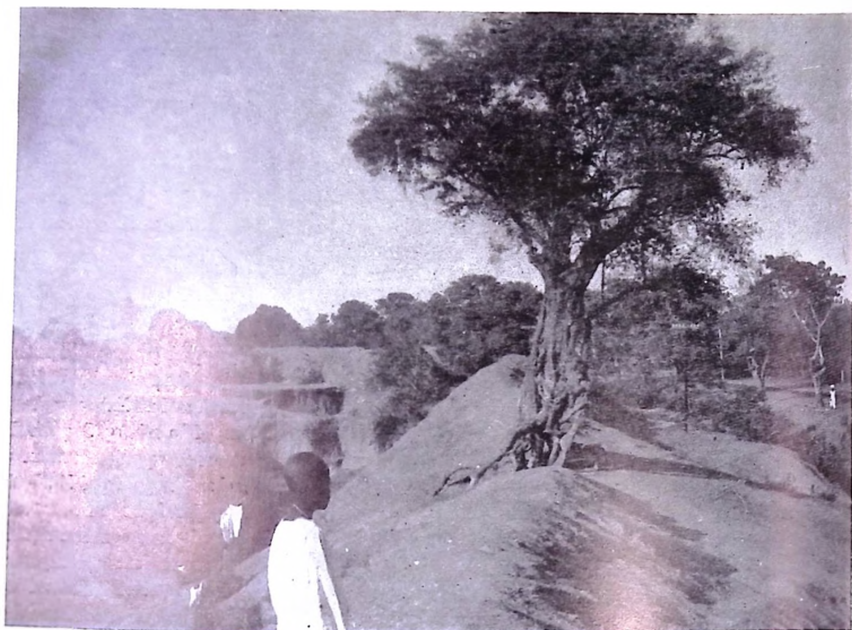


Section of Wall near Kofar Duka Wuyal showing small wall on outer edge of moat

On the other hand, the eastern parts of the Wall, lying closest to the populated areas of the city, both inside and outside, are likely to have been most heavily raided for building materials; and it is therefore difficult to estimate whether the Walls on this side were ever completed to the bold grandeur of the design on the south and west. We have a comment by the early Hausa expert, J. A. Robinson, in 1895[1] that 'the Walls themselves are a good deal out of repair on this side; evidently no attack is expected from this direction'.

Before we begin our itinerary, it will be useful to give some consideration to the method of construction of the Walls. There is plenty of evidence that the Walls though vastly higher and thicker than the usual walls of a house or a compound have been constructed by completely traditional methods. This involved the use of pear-shaped hand-moulded 'bricks' (*tubali*, H.), which are prepared near the site, dried in the sun, and then 'cemented' into position with further mud. Exposure of the surface in many places, and surviving sections which have somehow resisted the weather unusually well, make clear that at least the outer layer and the finishing touches to the Walls were made in this way. At some points the bricks have been cemented on to the Walls in vertical layers, sometimes of slightly different coloured earth, so that one sees an effect as of vertical strata running lengthways. When the Wall had been filled out to the required dimensions, a hard water-resistant plaster was applied. This plaster (*laso*, H.) which is hardened with an infusion of locust beans or of (*kanwa*) potash has a blackish appearance, and can still be seen extensively on the walls of important local residences such as the Emir's Nassarawa palace and *Gidan Beaminster*. On the Walls themselves this plaster still survives in a few places, as

[1] In '*Hausaland:* 1500 *Miles Through the Central Soudan*'.



The Wall near Kofar Dan Agundi with thorn tree (Kurna) *growing on the crest*

for example at mile 3½ west of Kofar Nassarawa, but in most places it has long since slipped down into the moat.

Whether the whole of the Wall from the most ancient times was constructed in this way it is difficult to say. The general impression given at present is that the parapets and facings of the Wall made from hard-made bricks were superimposed on earlier mounds which were much more homogeneous in texture. For example, if one goes down into some of the recent builders' excavations say at Mile 3 on the Challawa Road, or just north of Kofar Mazugal, it is possible to see the original level of the ground, and to distinguish between mother earth and the material which has been piled above it. At this depth in the Wall, however, there is no sign of individual building bricks; either they have been pressed out of their individual shapes by pressure over hundreds of years, or the earlier walls may have been constructed by a different method, involving the building up of layer upon layer of unmoulded mud.[1] It would be interesting to know if any date can be given for the adoption in Hausaland of the method of mud building by hand-shaped bricks.

The dimensions of the Wall in its most highly developed parts were meticulously measured and drawn by Lugard's surveyors, whose work is well confirmed by surviving photographs of that period. A few points shown on these drawings, and of which evidence still remains, should be stressed. In some parts certainly there was a berm, or carriage drive round the outside between the Wall and the ditch; this, though possibly giving some advantage to attackers, was presumably of convenience in building and repair work. Traces of the berm can best be seen between Kofar Nassarawa and Kofar Dan Agundi, where still in the evening

[1] A type of structure called by archaeologists the 'dump rampart'.

cattle can be seen following the line of the berm as they are herded into the city for the night. Secondly, there was a similar kind of broad track, for the easy movement of defensive forces, running round the inside of the Wall, well below the level of the defensive 'stations': Mrs Larymore[1] records having driven round this and the best traces of it can be observed between Kofar Gadon Kaya and Kofar Waika. Lugard's survey showed a *double* ditch on the outside of the Wall, but no indication of this as a regular feature of the defensive system can be seen at present. A fact which has not been recorded before, so far as I am aware, is the existence of a small subsidiary wall built along the *outer* edge of the ditch; sections of this about 2 feet thick and 3 feet high, built of the same hand-moulded bricks can be seen between Kofar Duka Wuya and Kofar Kabuga.

'BORROW–PITS' (*kududdufi*, H.)

I have not succeeded in getting any reliable etymological explanation of this expression, which is always used to refer to the extensive excavations of earth both inside and outside the Walls, many of them, of course, now standing lakes of some extent and depth. Perhaps they have this name, as it was from them that the earth was 'borrowed' to make the wall, but this seems too easy an explanation.

ITINERARY

Here follow observations made on a clockwise journey round the Walls, beginning from Kofar Mata, perhaps the most famous of all. Detailed description and discussion of the Gates, and their localities, as they exist at present, is to be the subject of another article.

KOFAR MATA—KOFAR NASSARAWA

In this short section the Wall is far from spectacular, having declined to the natural level of subsidence: even the special efforts to refurbish this section for the Kano Festival of 1959 seem to have left no trace. On the outer side, the Wall slopes down about 8–10 feet to the roadway, beyond which stands the Liberty Stadium, and bears signs of frequent use as a public open latrine. On the inner side the Wall falls sharply some 30 feet to an open drain, crammed with many kinds of household refuse from the row of compounds just opposite, many of them with special doors in their back walls, to facilitate the deposit of rubbish into this 'gutter'. Walking along the crest, one looks across into a number of typical small compounds with their characteristic scenes of domestic life. As we approach the Lorry Park near to Kofar Nassarawa, a wide borrow–pit of about one acre opens up on the inside of the Wall, dark and sinister if seen under a late evening sky, or beautifully reflecting the blue of the sky if seen in the early morning.

KOFAR NASSARAWA—KOFAR DAN AGUNDI

Here we are still in the foothills: the Wall is no more than a long undulating mound, well worn down, with little suggestion of its original defensive function. On the outer side it is possible to see traces of the original berm, along which a fair quantity of low bushes have planted themselves. On the inner side we pass a system of wide and intricate borrow–pits, containing water at several different levels, and many of them still in use for the extraction of building materials, which is carried off in donkey-panniers into the city. Quite a number of informal gaps have been made in the Wall by well-used paths which cut through, giving access between the City and the School of Hygiene and the groundnut stacking area beyond the Nassarawa railway crossing. Soon after the rains begin in May each year, the area is pleasantly green with short grass, and the deeper parts of the moat fill with pools of standing water: the shade-bearing trees round the School of Hygiene and the Provincial Secondary School add a pleasant park-like atmosphere to the neighbourhood. This area of the Wall, especially near the Government Secondary School, seems to have become something of a donkey's graveyard, and at any given time there are likely to be several corpses being disembowelled and picked clean by the local vultures: possibly these are the donkeys which die of overwork or exhaustion in the extraction of building material just

[1] In *A Resident's Wife in Nigeria*, 1908.

inside the Wall. In times past, a number of medium-sized trees have taken root on the crest of the Wall itself and the roots of some which have fallen or been cut down still protrude. A particularly notable [illegible] about 100 yards east of Kofar Dan Agundi. Since the tree has been growing there, [illegible] washed away from [illegible] seems to be standing [illegible] of the Wall at the [illegible] to grow there can [illegible] of the exposed [illegible] tree, which I would [illegible] years, the Wall here [illegible] feet of its height.

[illegible] Agundi, the E.C.N. [illegible] Nigeria) Substation [illegible] of the new against [illegible] this section, the Wall in [illegible] been pierced by the new 'Kofa [illegible] type of archway, [illegible] access between what was formerly the [illegible] School and the N.A. [illegible] Offices.

KOFAR DAN AGUNDI—KOFAR NA ISA

Our footway continues easily along the crest of this section, with the Wall no more than an undulating mound, rather like a grass-coated sand dune, at heights varying between 15 and 25 feet. On the outer side, the ground opens out to farming land until we come to the greater enclosed area of the wireless-transmitting station. On the inner side, most of this area is occupied by a large Muslim burial ground, which keeps the ground free and clear until the houses lining the road to Kofar Na Isa sweep out to join the Wall. Certainly here the earth used for building the Wall appears sandier than elsewhere, and all traces of mud-brick building has entirely vanished.

KOFAR NA ISA—KOFAR GADON KAYA

This is a long stretch, probably (as suggested on page 5) consisting of fortifications from two distinct periods. As we leave Kofar Na Isa, the Wall for the first time becomes boldly vertical, and for a while is about 30 feet high. The outer surface is quite rugged and sheer, though the height is soon lost, and there is much evidence of erosion, for there are no signs here of the original outer plaster, until we come to several large isolated fragments between Milestones 3 and 4. The area near Kofar Na Isa is much frequented by goats which have not only continuously undercut the outer surface as they rub their backs along the Wall at ground level, but also, jumping up and down have hollowed out a number of sheltered resting places, which gives this section an appearance (for those who know it) of Mappin Terrace at the London Zoo. In this section it is still possible to walk along the top of the Wall, though at times the footway passes behind sections of surviving parapet, sometimes incorporating small lumps or rock, where the constructional material has proved unusually durable.

In the later stages of this section, beyond Mile 3, the steepness has gone and the Wall reverts for the most part to a low earthen mound. At the bend in the Wall opposite Mile 3, there appears another series of deep borrow-pits, cut deeply out of the ground right up to the inner edge of the Wall, which is here surprisingly precipitous. These pits are filled with water throughout the year, and form the biggest expanses of open water we have yet seen. These borrow-pits have made less incursion into the Wall than into the burial ground which obviously at some time filled the area adjacent to the Wall. As we walk along we can see on the opposite, cliff-like edges of the borrow-pit, numbers of the shallow two-stage burial pits which have been exposed, and appear as in cross-section. Other evidences of burial in this area are, for example, a pair of femurs projecting several inches out of the side of a gravel pit, or a small skull looking out from what seems to be solid mother earth. I thought at first that these burials might have been ancient, but I am told that a Muslim burial ground may be used for other purposes after no more than fifty years, and it seems that this burial area may after all be fairly recent.

After the bend at Milestone 3, the Wall runs in one of its longest straight stretches to Kofar Kabuga. The land on the inside is virgin farm-land, except for an occasional shallow pool which serves as a herons' feeding place, while the roadside verge

Signs of erosion

skirting the Wall on the outside carries the two inelegant wirelines of the Posts and Telegraphs telephone and the E.C.N. cables. Like some of the other main roads leading out of Kano, the Challawa Road hereabouts is regrettably used for the dumping of miscellaneous household and industrial rubbish. Here we meet for the first time the Forestry Department plantations which have been growing steadily year by year southwards from the Katsina Road: no doubt, in a few years' time the plantations of rapidly growing trees will have concealed the ugly wires and the Walls alike!

The materials of the Wall in this section have not stood up well to wear and tear, as is emphasized by the two or three great buttresses which have survived, still carrying some of the grey-black outer facing. These demonstrate that the Wall sloped back from the vertical at an angle of about 15°, and that the outer facing had been plastered on to rows and rows of the modest pear-shaped *tubali*. At two points the crest of the Wall is so jagged and crumbly that most travellers will need to drop down for a time either to the fields on the inside, or the roadside strip on the outside. About 150 yards east of Kofar Gadon Kaya, it is worth noting a substantial thorn tree which has grown at ground level on the inner side of the Wall. The tree has had the effect of saving this part of the Wall's inner surface from erosion, and traces of the step formation on the inside of the Wall can be well observed.

KOFAR GADON KAYA—KOFAR DUKA WUYA

From Kofar Gadon Kaya the Wall begins to take on a more rural, even sylvan atmosphere. The walking along this section is mostly comfortable and easy. On the outside, the Forestry plantations of neem trees have already grown high enough to conceal the Wall from the road, and

Borrow-pits at Mile 3 Challawa Road, showing imminent collapse of Wall

vice versa; and a variety of bird and insect life flits about gaily, while on the inside the rich, intensively cultivated farms of the Kano countryside, scattered with large shady trees and pyramid-shaped piles of *dawa* stalks, take on their characteristic appearance, unspoiled by any trace of urbanization. Most of the Wall here again has declined to the normal angle of subsidence, but a few large sections with fully surfaced outer aspects occur just before the whole is swallowed up by the impenetrable brambles which add additional defences to the Wall as it skirts the premises of the Women's Training College. For this section, one must drop down to the outer ditch if it is dry, or, if it is not, find a path through the plantations beyond it. Soon we come to the ugly cleft of the modern 'Kofar Pampo' where the water main from the pumping station on the River Challawa runs through to the reservoir on Goron Dutse. (To be precise, it is the road escorting the water main which runs through this new gateway: the water engineer showed sufficient respect for the Wall to pass the water main itself *under* the Wall some fifteen feet to the east).

It is beyond 'Kofar Pampo' that the Wall really begins to assert its dignity and draw itself up to something like its full height. A sure-footed traveller can pass along the top of the Wall between 'Pampo' and Kofar Duka Wuya, though he will have to duck his head under the low branches of a number of thorn trees (*kurna*, H.) which have taken root on the upper slopes; and on the whole the foothole is easier for goats than for men. The surface is loose, slippery, laterite gravel, and the outer edge plunges vertically down into masses of thorns and brambles which grow rigorously from the moisture which the ditch here retains.

KOFAR DUKA WUYA—KOFAR KABUGA

For those who frequent the Women's Training

College or Adullahi Bayero College, this is one of the most attractive stretches. It is less precipitous than the section we have just passed, but provides an elevated, undulating footway, interspersed with occasional surviving pieces of parapet. In the evening the sun sinks down to the west, and its horizontal rays sweep across the countryside emphasizing the ruddy colours of the Wall itself, and picking out the fascinating bulks of Goron Dutse and the more remote Dalla. Along this section one may startle the occasional hare which scampers off in a big semi-circle back to the other burrows which have been excavated further along the Wall. Here too the ditch has been cleanly cut out from the rock in places, and on the outer edge can be seen portions of the low wall described on page 29. In this area we begin to see the visible signs of the gradual sliding down of sections of the Wall, as the rain seeps in between the vertical strata.

KOFAR KABUGA—KOFAR KANSAKALI

The first part of this great arc of the Wall is comfortable walking, but the height of the Wall gradually increases and the footing becomes more hazardous, until we reach a cemented survey stone, where descent to the inside becomes essential. Before descending, however—indeed at several points along the section—one should look back towards the east, for from this point of view there is a fine impression of the Wall's extent. Having descended, one can follow a small field path which follows along the base of the Wall, or if the season is suitable, make a direct cross-country traverse towards Kofar Kansakali, which can easily be located as it stands only about 250 yards west of Goron Dutse. There is little human habitation in this area except for the small hamlets which have grown up on the inside of the gateways. The brambles come surging up the outer side of the Wall, as they stretch up towards the sun. None of them seems to have the ivy-like habit of sending suckers or rootlets into the supporting 'host', and we can only thankfully suppose that this growth of brambles serves to prolong the life of the Wall by protecting it from humans, from animals, and even to some extent from rain.

As the Wall swings round towards Kofar Kansakali, it is worth getting back on to it as soon as possible, for the approach to this gate, reposing in the shelter of Goron Dutse, is quite dramatic. The Wall is less high for the last quarter of a mile, and it is again possible to see the exposed outer surface, sloping down into the ditch with abundant signs of its rapid and continuous subsidence. It is at Kansakali that this outer Wall meets the several other inner walls already described (*see* page 25), and at this junction takes on a massive strength as though this, the chief exit to, or the nearest point of contact with, Sokoto, needed special care. The Walls from both north and south, it will be seen, converge on Kofar Kansakali, which is at the apex of a large re-entrant, and eminently defensible from mounted attacks. The ground slopes upwards from Kofar Kansakali to Goron Dutse, and it is interesting to note that the well which serves the dwellers of this gate is on the outer edge of the ditch, *outside* the Wall altogether.

KOFAR KANSAKALI—KOFAR WAIKA

Here the Wall is at its very finest. The oval shape of Goron Dutse is never more than about 400 yards distant, and the Wall swings round it matching curve for curve. On the inner side, the Wall declines a considerable distance (some 40 feet) to the low-lying field below, and traces of an inner drive, somewhat above ground level, are often evident. Sections of parapet remain in places where the integument holding the *tubali* together has been tougher than usual. The Wall here maintains its height of about 40 feet above the ditch as it sweeps round in a steady arc towards Kofar Waika. The crest of the Wall can be easily traversed in most places, though the outer face drops away precipitously: some sections are in the process of flaking off, and can be seen sliding slowly into the ditch beneath. There is a slight re-entrant 'kink' about half-way along this section, and it is here that the original hard, black, outer surface is still in position.

KOFAR WAIKA—KOFAR DAWANAU—KOFAR LUNKUI

This is the least accessible section of the Wall.

Kofar Kansakali looking North

The Forestry Plantation on the outer verge is here at its most mature; the trees rise up as high as the Wall itself, and an impenetrable creeping undergrowth of thorns and brambles has overrun both the crest and most of the inner slope, so that the pedestrian has no choice but to cut across the fields towards Kofar Lunkui. In this section the Wall is quite as high and sheer as in the previous one, and occasional glimpses of its outer face and sharp crest can be caught through the trees along the roadside. The ditch here is also overgrown and allows no easy passage. Soon after Kofar Dawanau an eastward-flowing water course joins the ditch, and in fact follows it all the way until it links up with the small river Tukurwa, a mile or so onwards.

KOFAR LUNKUI—KOFAR MAZUGAL

At Kofar Lunkui we have reached the most northerly part of our journey. The Wall east of Kofar Lunkui is still 30–40 feet high, but is even more overgrown than elsewhere, for a well-established Forestry Reserve now appears on the *inner* side of the Wall as well as the outer. It is, however, practicable to follow the outer ditch which, as we have seen, is also the course of a small stream, dry for only about 2–3 months of the year. The stream bed shows signs of water-scouring, and evidently in the wet season a good flow of water passes along here—hence incidentally the high viaduct, or causeway, outside Kofar Lunkui. The stream bed and the ditch circle gradually round to the south-east, and after about two-thirds of a mile our stream is joined by its senior brother, the Tukurwa, which seems to drain from some depressions and swamps in the areas enclosed by the northern apex of the Wall. The Tukurwa seems to have made itself a way through the Wall, somewhere opposite the Army Barracks on the Katsina Road. I have not been able to satisfy myself that this gap is what some of

Sections of Wall flaking off near Kofar Waika

rises in the west of the city towards Goron Dutse, serves as the principal open drain of the City Market, and here cuts through the Wall in a quite unspectacular way. Even in mid-June, it is no more than a slimy sluggish stream, and a single piece of stone in the middle enables the passer-by to cross it in two strides. Yet, the rich nourishment it bears can be deduced as our eye follows its green-flanked meandering course eastwards towards Fagge and Sabon Gari and sees the thorn-enclosed gardens full of lettuce, cabbage, cauliflowers, marrows, tomatoes and carrots.

After we have crossed the stream, for a moment no sign of the Wall can be discovered, but on coming round a little one finds it proceeding on southwards. Here is one of the most picturesque stretches, not so much from the scenic as from the social point of view. The ground inside the Wall here is at quite a high level and the Wall itself to begin with seems only two or three feet above the earthen track which runs immediately inside it, though on the outer side it slopes down gradually some 30–40 feet to the open grassy plain below, which is indented with many disused and overgrown borrow-pits. Along the inside lane appear the frontages of a series of very neat, compact Kano compounds with well-swept exteriors, many with gaily painted doorways; there seems to be a decency about this area, which is reflected even in the cheerfulness and courtesy of the inhabitants whom one passes at their compound doors. About two hundred yards before we reach Kofar Wambai, the path still inclining upwards, the Wall again mounts up, though our path remains faithfully its foot. At this point it reaches a height of so 20–25 feet and seems to give special shelter to t buildings which line the small lane, and harbo now a tailor's shop, now a bicycle repairer's, n a Koranic School and so on. One remarkat establishment seems to be a dairy with we cemented floor and lofty, dark milking-shed immediately opposite a Bethlehem-like stable h been built right up against the Wall, so that t way for passengers is somewhat constricted. Of a sections of the Wall near to inhabited urban are this is the one which has survived best, and so runs up to Kofar Wambai, the outlet of 'down town' Kano, and the chief link between the Cit Market and Fagge.

KORAR WAMBAI—KOFAR MATA

It was at Kofar Wambai, we have seen, that the Emir Mohammed Rumfa, sprang his extensions to the Wall, and here we find a new, lofty and massive section of the Wall swinging out at right angles to the left (i.e. to the east). It runs about thirty yards before bending south-east again, following along the side of the Id ground, with the Orion Cinema in the background, until we soon come to Kofar Mata, where the Emir comes forth to lead the prayers of the mighty throngs of Kanawa who assemble there at the great Muslim Festivals. As in the section with which we started our journey, the Wall is here much worn away and serves merely as a raised boundary line.

'OPA ORANYAN'—*Staff of Oranyan. It now stands on a hallowed spot in Ile-Ife*

IFE: The Home of a New University

By DR I. A. AKINJOGBIN

[illegible] of Ife has recently moved its [illegible] to its permanent home at Ile-Ife. [illegible] five faculties and one of the [illegible] have moved. One more faculty [illegible] move before the beginning of next academic [illegible]. By the end of 1968 all the faculties [illegible] have moved completely. No doubt the [illegible] of the University is bound to make a [illegible] impact, social, cultural and economic, on the city and people of Ife. A natural question that comes to mind therefore is, what kind of city is Ife?

Geographically, Ife lies about fifty miles north-east of Ibadan, the administrative headquarters of Western Region of Nigeria. It is now a moderately sized city of about a hundred thousand population and lies in the midst of a rich agricultural region. A large percentage of the cocoa which still forms the backbone of the economy of Western Nigeria comes from this area.

Historically, Ife is the most ancient of all the Yoruba cities. Unfortunately, we cannot now catch a glimpse of what ancient Ife looked like at the height of its political and artistic achievements.

Entrance view to Museum of Ife Antiquities at Ile-Ife

Events in the Yoruba country starting from about the beginning of the 19th century until the third decade of the 20th century combined to destroy most of the material remains. The real ancient Ife was destroyed in 1849 as a result of a civil war. Some thirty-three years later, what had been built out of the 1849 ashes was again destroyed. What Leo Frobenius saw in 1910, which he described in the most glowing terms, was indeed a shadow of the ancient grandeur. If the shadow was impressive, we can only imagine the reality before chaos set in.

Yet though most of the material artefacts are destroyed, all is not lost. Some exquisite works have escaped both the burning of the 19th century soldiery and the magnetic hands of subsequent collectors of art works. Moreover, the glories of the old days continue to live on, not only in the minds of Ife people, but also in the minds of all those throughout West Africa who had had any contact with Ile-Ife.

Everybody knows that Ile-Ife is regarded by all Yorubas as their first city from where migrated not only the ruling classes but most of the inhabitants to their present homes. Places as far away as Ketu in modern Dahomey, and Atakpame in modern Togo trace their origin to Ife. In Benin where the large population is unwilling to accept origin from Ife, no one seriously doubts that the monarchy of Benin and all the immediate nobility of the Oba of Benin migrated from Ife.

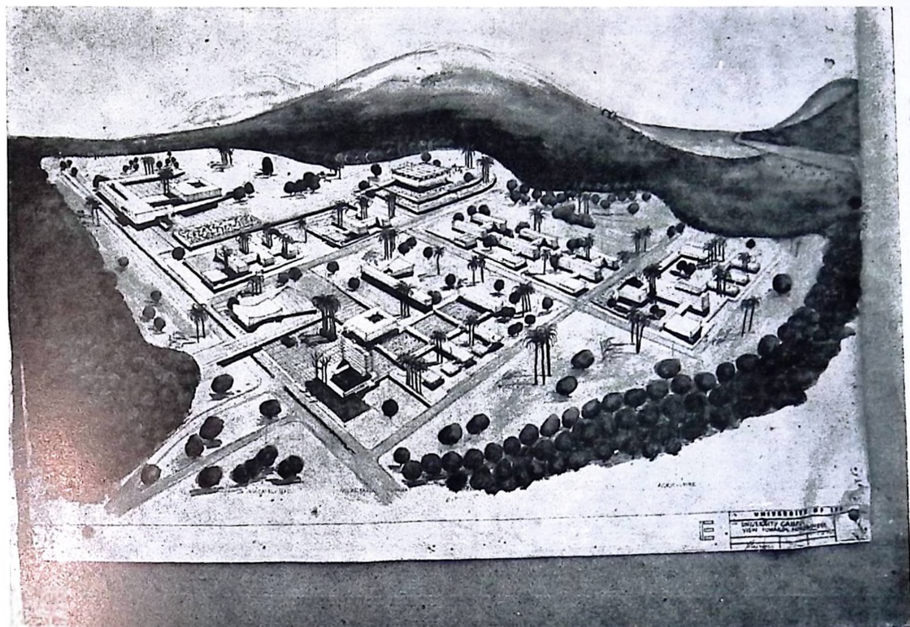
From Benin to Atakpame, and from Lagos to Oyo Ile (Old Oyo in the maps) Ife is known as

Ife ondaiye, ibi oju ti imo wa

Literally translated into English this means 'Ife' the creator of the world, from where light comes.' Properly understood, it means, Ife the origin of the world, from where culture and civilization radiate. Perhaps it is necessary to point out in passing that the literal translation 'from where light comes' was still further misconstrued by the early Portuguese to refer to the light of the sun

Wood-carving from Oke Iho from the Museum of the Institute of African Studies of the University of Ife

A mask from Ekiti, from the Museum of the Institute of African Studies of the University of Ife



Picture of an Artist's impression of the aerial view of Ife University campus

coming from the east and so they translated that apellation of Ife as Ife, the origin of the world which lay to the east. Professor Ryder has recently seized on this mistaken translation of the original Yoruba sentence to prove that there was another Ife which lay east of Benin!

Most people now know that Oduduwa is regarded as the father of the Yoruba through the activities of a cultural organization named after Oduduwa. Some people are probably also now confused by the formation of another Yoruba—wide cultural organization called Egbe Omo Olofin and they may be asking who really is the ancestor of the Yoruba? It is only necessary to say that Olofin and Oduduwa are two of the known names of the same person. Therefore, there is no conflict in the historical implications of those names.

However, to represent Oduduwa as the father of all Yorubas and then proceed to assume that the growth of Ife and the expansion of the Yoruba into various kingdoms proceeded with the least of frictions will be simplifying issues unnecessarily. Oral tradition relates the history of the chequered growth of Ife. There would seem to be the Orisanla faction and the Oduduwa faction. The former formed the Igbo society which burned Ife several times until the Oduduwa faction produced Moremi, a woman of excelling beauty and indomitable courage. She finally exposed the Igbo tricks and got them conquered. Reconciliation followed and the city then grew.

The result of this peaceful growth was that some time, after that, the city became over populated. Perhaps the extension of the city boundary would have been the next step but there was a prolonged drought which resulted in famine. This was the immediate cause of the exodus from Ife, an exodus that led to the foundation of the earliest Yoruba kingdoms. The exodus was planned and orderly for we are told in the oral tradition

A view of some of the Faculty Buildings of the University of Ife at Ile-Ife

A hall of residence for the undergraduates of the University of Ife at their new site in Ile-Ife

that the emigrating princes collected themselves in a place called *Ita Ijero* (spot still in Ife) where they deliberated on which way to go, who was to go where and what royal symbols they were to take along. The migration relieved Ife of the pressure on provisions and not long after, rains came.

There are said to be over four hundred kings who have reigned in Ife, but so far no one has got a complete list. Apart from the most famous kings such as Oduduwa and Oranyan, there are such romantic names as Kutukutu, Oba Igbo, Osangangan Obamakin, Lafogido and a host of others. It is hoped that a comprehensive research into the history of Ife now under active preparation will not only unearth a great many names of the past rulers of Ife but will also tell us something about their contribution to African past.

It is perhaps in the religious-cum-cultural field that Ife is most famous. The whole world now knows the artistic achievements of Ife through the revelations of scholars like Frobenius and other anthropologists and archaeologists who have worked in Yorubaland since 1910. The famous bronze heads now lying in the Ife Museum are only a fraction of what must have been abundant in the heyday of Ife culture. At their discovery, the Western world was so surprised at such exquisite things with their technical finish made by a method that had been lost in Europe since the Greek era, that they doubted whether Africans could have produced such classics. To us Africans, that was really cheeky. And the discovery of terra-cotta again in Ife, made out of Ife earth in exactly the same style as the bronzes, has since 1958 disbanded any doubts.

Not only are Ife arts famous, Benin art is also famous. And Benin tradition relates that Benin art derived from Ife. Again there are not wanting those who now affect to doubt this tradition. Their basis of doubt is that Benin style is different. But such people really ought to know that to derive from somewhere does not mean to copy that

An equestrian Yoruba warrior of 18th century on horseback carved in wood.

Decorated bronze Bowl from Ijebu-Ode from one side, from the Museum of the Institute of African Studies of the University of Ife.

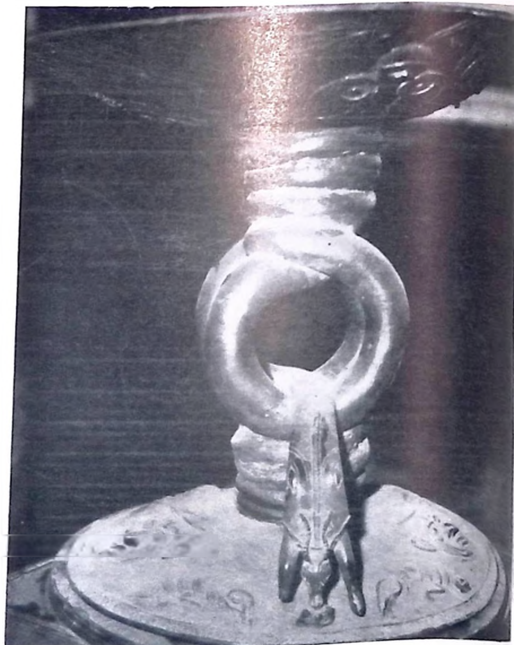
source. Arts is not art unless it has room for development.

Ife religion is less known than Ife art, but it is, nevertheless, as developed. Indeed it was the religious development which gave birth to the art and the excellence or the art can be regarded as a reflection of the state of the religion. Indeed it ought to be realized that in ancient Ife and in the whole of Yorubaland, nothing was purely secular. In Ile-Ife, there are said to be over three hundred and sixty-six gods, others say there are four hundred. Without going into the arguments, about which one is right or wrong, one thing is clear: that everyday of the year, at least one important religious festival dominates the life of the town.

These gods have also been taken to all the kingdoms in Yorubaland with the migration of peoples. The result is, that all the most important Yoruba gods are traced to Ife. They are too many to be enumerated but one can mention a few such as Orisanla (or Obatala in other places), Oduduwa, Oranyan, Ogun, Olokun and Ifa. Strictly speaking Ifa is not a deity. It is the compendium of ALL knowledge. I emphasize 'all' because I believe this is still valid. It contains history, philosophy, medicine and even mathematics among others. Yoruba traditions relate that Ifa started at Ife and if this was so, then knowledge must have really been deeply pursued in ancient Ife.

All these go to prove that Ife is an ideal home for a University. Indeed one can now ask why it had not formerly occurred to planners of West African Universities to have cited one there before now. For in West African culture, Ife is the first name.

Decorated bronze Bowl from Ijebu-Ode from another side, from the Museum of the Institute of African Studies of the University of Ife.



IJO ORIGINS AND MIGRATIONS*

II—MIGRATIONS

By Dr E. J. Alagoa

THREE categories of migrations may be distinguished from a study of the traditions of origin of the individual Ijo IBE. First, the migrations entirely within the delta from one Ijo area to another; second, the migrations from one part of the delta to another but first passing through the hinterland, and third the migrations from the delta northwards to the fringe areas.

The traditions of migrations within the delta point to a number of primary centres of dispersion, namely Obiama, Ikibiri, Oporoma, Ogobiri in the Igbedi-Sagbama creek area, and Oproza. Nembe, Ke, and Okrika may be named as secondary centres, since their populations have traditions of previous migration from one of the primary centres (Nembe and Okrika), or account for only a small number of migrations (Ke). A brief survey of the traditions of migrations involving these places will reveal something of the basis for these distinctions.

The town of Obiama has been deserted for an unknown length of time, but its site is marked by a giant pepper tree and named as the place of origin by many IBE in the central and eastern delta. The entire Boma and Tarakiri IBE are said to have grown out of migrants from Obiama. The traditions of all Nembe towns on the Atlantic sea-board, namely Liama, Egwema, Twon, Odioma and Okpoma claim origin from Obiama. Further, some of these coastal traditions imply that the metropolis of Nembe also derived its first settlers from Obiama — although traditions at Nembe itself are contradictory, they indicate at least early contact with Obiama. Ogoloma (Okrika IBE) traditions of origin also mention Obiama as a

ANGALAYAI MASQUERADE *dancing on top of a pole*

* This paper was read at the U.S. Peace Corps History Conference, University of Nigeria, Nsukka.

Members of SEKIAPU CLUB *dancing during Angalayai Masquerade play*

major stopping place for its founders.[1] All of these places (except Okrika) are within a radius of thirty miles from Obiama.

There are varying versions of how Obiama was destroyed and its people dispersed in all directions. According to Boma informants,[2] Obiama itself was founded by one Obi of unknown origin. It grew to become a large city divided into a number of quarters (*POLO*). Each year, one quarter hunted for a *wan* (togo hare or duiker) for a ritual feast. The soup had to be shared equally among all members of the community, since it gave fertility. During one of these festivals, one quarter fraudulently took all the soup. The result was a civil war in which the inhabitants dispersed. Two 'sons' of Obi founded Boma and Tarakiri. Other versions suggest different causes of the civil war, while a number of versions allege external attack. But the majority of traditions would imply that the inhabitants of Obiama were aboriginal Ijo people. The Okrika traditions used here would, however, derive the founder of Obiama from the other major centre of dispersion, Ikibiri, to the north-west of Obiama.

Ikibiri situated in the area of Ekpetiama IBE in the central delta is the ancestral home of Seimbiri IBE of the western delta. The actual site of the ancient city of Isomabou (or Somobo) is stated to be six miles west of Ikiribi a place also named as the original home of Ogulaya, the fore-

[1] Okrika traditions obtained from Chief Ebenezer Dalafaka Wolseley Opuogulaya of Ogoloma.

[2] Dickson Akisi (80) of Peremabiri and Maclean Ologo (44) of Ekowe with the elders of both places in 1964.

bear of the Ogoloma Okrika.[1] Isomabou or places close to it and named variously as Opuanbou and Opuanbiri also supplied the founders of many towns of Ekpetiama IBE, and Onopa in Epie-Atissa. Other traditions mention places in Kolokuma and Opokuma and Aboh as also settled from Ikibiri.[2] Ikibiri traditions assign the destruction of Isomabou to attack from the Tarakiri (migrants from Obiama) to the south. This southern origin of the dispersal probably accounts for the migrations north, east, and westwards, and not southwards.

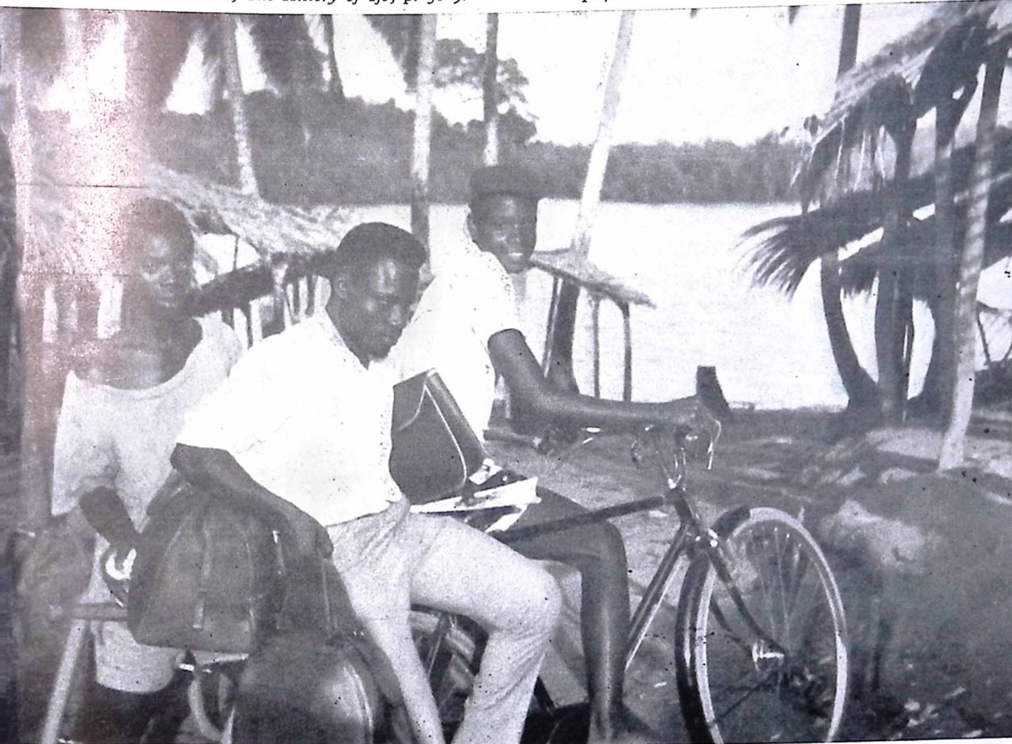
About twenty miles southwest of Ikibiri is the town of Oporoma which is one of the few places in the Ijo delta whose inhabitants have claimed to be indigenous, the founder having 'dropped from a cloud.'[3] Ekeremo the founder of Operemo IBE in the western delta is stated to have migrated from Oporoma by traditions at both places. There are, further, traditions connecting Olodiama IBE in the central delta to the immediate south of Oporoma with the same migration. Aguo, the founder of Yenagoa in Epie-Atissa to the north is also derived from Aguobiri in Oporoma IBE, while the town of Oporoma in Kalabari far to the east was originally a part of Oporoma of the central delta.

The Sagbama-Igbedi creek (in the region of Ogobiri) would seem to have been an important centre of dispersion. Points in this area are mention-

[1] C. C. Legge, *Intelligence Report on the Seimbiri sub-clan of the Ogbo Clan....* 1931, p. 7; Chief Opuogulaya for Ogoloma traditions.

[2] S. K. Owonaro, *The History of Ijo*, p. 58–9.

[3] J. C. Porter, *Oporoma Clan, Intelligence Report*, 1931, p. 7.



Bicycle transportation to market at the waterfront between Nkoro and Ogoni

ANGALAYAI MASQUERADE *of Nembe (Brass) representing the monkey of the mangrove forests*

BELOW: *The chief drummer playing a battery of drums at the Angalayai play*

ed as ancestral homes in the traditions of Tarakiri and Mein IBE in the western delta; and in the traditions of Kolokuma and Opokuma IBE in the central delta. The interlocking traditions concerned with this region still await detailed recording and analysis.

The traditions concerning the dispersion centre of Oproza near the mouth of the Escravos River also need to be disentangled. The traditions of Arogbo IBE in Okitipupa Division, Kabowei and Kumbowei IBE in the Mid-West, and Gbaran IBE and the town of Gbaran in Apoi IBE of the Eastern Provinces (central delta) refer to Oproza. Apoi IBE of the Western Provinces is also evidently to be associated with this network of migrations. The problem is to determine the sequence, directions and starting points of the migrations relating all of these widely spread Ijo sub-groups. Since an attempt at discussion of these complex traditions at this stage would only produce confusion, suffice it to say that the traditions of origin of Arogbo and Apoi IBE in the West; Gbaramatu (of which Oproza is the headquarters), Kabowei, and Kumbowei IBE in the Mid-West, and Apoi and Gbaran IBE in the Eastern Provinces relate to Oproza as an important starting or stopping place of migration.

By contrast with these primary centres of migration, Nembe and Okrika themselves have strong traditions of external places of origin for their inhabitants. They are, however, centres of migration because the destruction of the ancient Nembe settlement of Oboloma is said to have resulted in the foundation of Buseni, Okodia and

Priestesses gathered at shrine of the creator for worship

Town crier using iron gong at Nkoro

ruma IBE. Nkoro IBE is believed by its people have been founded from Okrika, although some embe traditions derive it from Oboloma and ntuo. Ke, on the contrary, has a reputation in e eastern delta for being the most ancient settlement. The people of Ke also claim to be autochonous, its founder having dropped from the . When Talbot visited Ke in 1932, he observed umber of things tending to confirm Ke's repuion for great age including the unusually large nber of sixty-one kings recited.[1] It is this reation that would seem to have attracted the of its name at Liama and Idema (Mini) in mbe IBE and Ekeni in Bassan IBE.

The second category of migrations involved passage through the Ibo hinterland. The traditions of both the Ibani (Bonny) and Kalabari (New Calabar) tell of original homes in the central delta that indicate connection with the Sagbama-Igbedi creek set of migrations. Both sub-groups moved up the Engenni creek and then cut across country eastwards. The Kalabari turned south towards the delta and lived for a while at Amafa on the delta fringe before finally choosing the site now known as Elem Kalabari or Elem Ama. The Ibani would seem to have wandered farther east and longer in the hinterland, finally turning southwards again through Ndoki country down the Imo River and its tributaries (*e.g.*, the Essene Creek) to Bonny or Okoloama.

The third category of migrations concerns movements northwards to the fringe of the delta. In

[1] P. A. Talbot, *Tribes of the Niger Delta*, p. 11.

Fish-mongers at the water-front at Shabomi, Apoi, Okitipupa Division

the western delta, the groups which are now non-Ijo speaking include the Apoi, Efferun, and Ughelle. The Apoi still retain their Ijo identity in spite of their Yoruba speech and recount traditions of migration from the delta on every occasion. Traditions in Tuomo and Gharan (of the central delta Apoi) claim the Urhobo speaking town of Efferun (or Efurun) to have been founded by migrants from these places. There are, however, other traditions claiming Efferun to have been founded by Erohwa from the vicinity of Patani in Kabo IBE.[1] The Urhobo groups of Owha and Ughelle also retain traditions of their connection with Tarakiri IBE.

Similarly in the central delta and the non-Ijo speaking Epie-Atissa, Ogbia and Mini have traditions of migration from the Ijo delta to the south. These traditions form the main basis for their claim to be identified as Ijo.

The case of the Ibo-speaking Ndoki of the eastern delta hinterland is rather different. Their traditions do not claim a movement out of the delta. Rather, they claim that the Ibani (Bonny) moved southwards from the Ndoki area; and that they the Ndoki had migrated from the same original Ijo homelands as the Ibani. Those homelands are said to be located in Benin, but this has been shown to be a cliche. The location of Ndoki origins may, accordingly be placed in the Sagbama-Igbedi creek area as for the Ibani and Kalabari. Such a conclusion would make the Ndoki a group of migrants from one section of the delta through the hinterland, who never made it back to the delta.

The discussion so far deals with questions of what and how. It may now be asked when these migrations occurred. The evidence of Pereira is that Bonny, and, presumably, the other city-states were established before 1500. This date confirms the estimates of the age of the monarchies of Bonny, Okrika and Nembe based on their king lists. The estimates give dates around 1400 for the first rulers. And the indication is that the populations of these cities arrived in these areas before 1400. In addition to the likelihood of telescoping in the king lists, some of the traditions indicate that there was a time before the monarchical institutions got established. In Nembe tradition there was a period of scattered settlements (in Oboloma, Olodiama, Onyoma, etc.) before the first king on the lists, Kala Ekule, became ruler. A list of nine heads has been made out for Oboloma, suggesting a span of up to two centuries.[2] We may conclude, therefore, that the migrations from Obiama, Ikibiri, and the other centres may have occurred as early as 1200, but probably before 1400.

IV. CONCLUSION

This discussion does not answer all the questions raised. It has merely attempted to show the range and complexity of the problems involved in analysing traditions of origin and migration. Accordingly, none of the conclusions suggested need be taken as final, but simply as an example of the nature of generalization and interpretation it is possible to arrive at from a comparative study of oral traditions. The general conclusion is that the field of recording and analysing Ijo traditions of all types and periods is still wide open.

A number of tentative conclusions are, however, offered on particular questions. On a place of origin for all Ijo outside the delta, the indication is that the movement into the delta took place too long ago to be recorded, in oral tradition. Even linguistic evidence is unable to confirm that the Ijo derived from any or a number of the bigger Nigerian groups to the delta hinterland. In the absence of a unitary explanation of Ijo origins, the sensible thing is a comparative study of the traditions of origin of the individual sub-groups across the Niger Delta.

These IBE traditions do not suggest 'waves' of migration from the hinterland or to anywhere, neither do we find evidence of one set of migrants pushing others along in a recurring pattern along any route. Rather, the evidence is of small groups of migrants leaving a number of points and spreading across the delta. These migrants would seem to have multiplied in their new settlements, some

[1] J. W. Hubbard, *The Sobo of the Niger Delta*, (Zaria, 1948) p. 214-17).

[2] Rev. D. O. Ockiya, *History of Nembe*, unpublished MSS, no date.

of which, in their turn, sent off settlers to other areas. Most traditions claim to have occupied virgin territory, but even in the cases where old established communities were encountered, there was a coalescing of cultures and peoples.

The degree of disparity between the evidence of the traditions and the theoretical speculations of the scholars would suggest that there is need to revise our concepts on and attitudes to origins, migrations, and oral tradition generally.

THE MYSTERY OF THE BURIED BRONZES

DISCOVERIES AT IGBO-UKWU, EASTERN NIGERIA

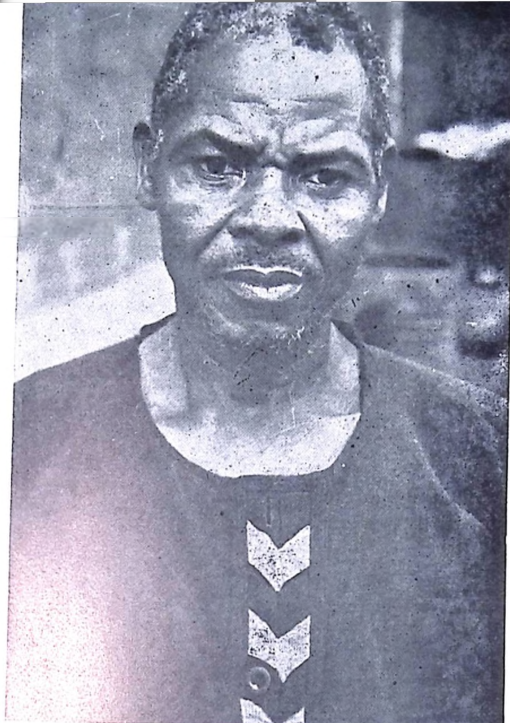
By Thurstan Shaw

A FEW months before the outbreak of World War II in 1939, a man was digging a cistern in his new compound on the outskirts of Igbo-Ukwu, a town of some 15,000 inhabitants about twenty-five miles south-east of Onitsha. During the dry season water is scarce in this area and it may have to be carried from some distance, as Igbo-Ukwu is situated on high ground. Accordingly cisterns are dug in the red sand to a depth of 18–25 feet, the upper part being a shaft only 3 feet in diameter, the lower part swelling out and with its sides well rammed to make it hold water. Surface water is run off into such cisterns during the rains, and the stored water will last throughout a not too severe dry season.

The man digging the cistern had not gone more than a couple of feet before he struck something hard, dug around it and pulled it out. It was a highly decorated bronze bowl, green with age, except at the point at which his hoe had struck it, where it showed a bright yellow. He stood it against the wall of his house, and continued his digging but was careful not to go too near his compound wall. He found a variety of other bronzes, and his neighbours came to see the pile of strange objects; some of them he gave away to those who thought they would make good medicine. Later on, the Assistant District Officer in the area came to hear of them, realized their archaeological importance, bought them from the finder, and gave an account of the discovery in an anthropological journal. He presented the whole collection to the Nigerian Museum in Lagos as soon as this was set up.

One interesting thing about these bronzes was that their style and their decoration were quite unlike the well-known bronzes of Benin and Ife. Who made them? Had they been made under the influence of Benin? And how long ago? The present people of Igbo-Ukwu had no idea they were there, but it was suggested that they could not be very old because some cloth was preserved

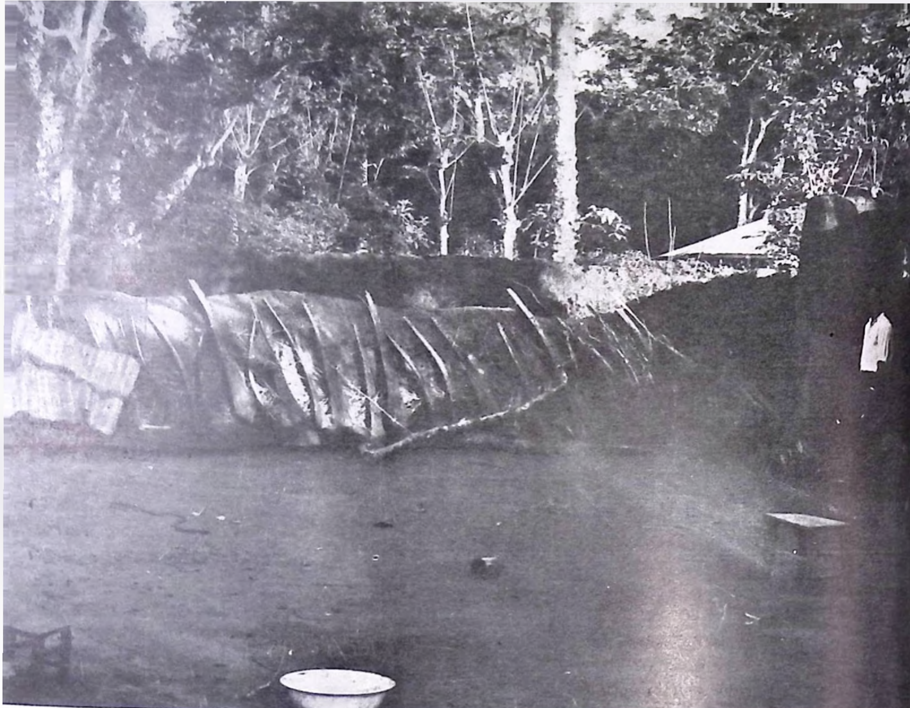
Painting (by Caroline Sassoon) of the Archaeologist's reconstruction of the way the corpse may have been left in the wooden-lined burial chamber, dressed in his coronation regalia and propped up on a copper-studded stool



Ritual vessel in the shape of a shell from the repository at Igbo-Ukwu. It is about 11 *inches long*

(Left): Isaiah Anozie, who made the first discovery of bronzes at Igbo-Ukwu

Painting (by Caroline Sassoon) of the Archaeologist's reconstruction of the way the repository of ritual vessels and regalia may originally have looked before it was abandoned

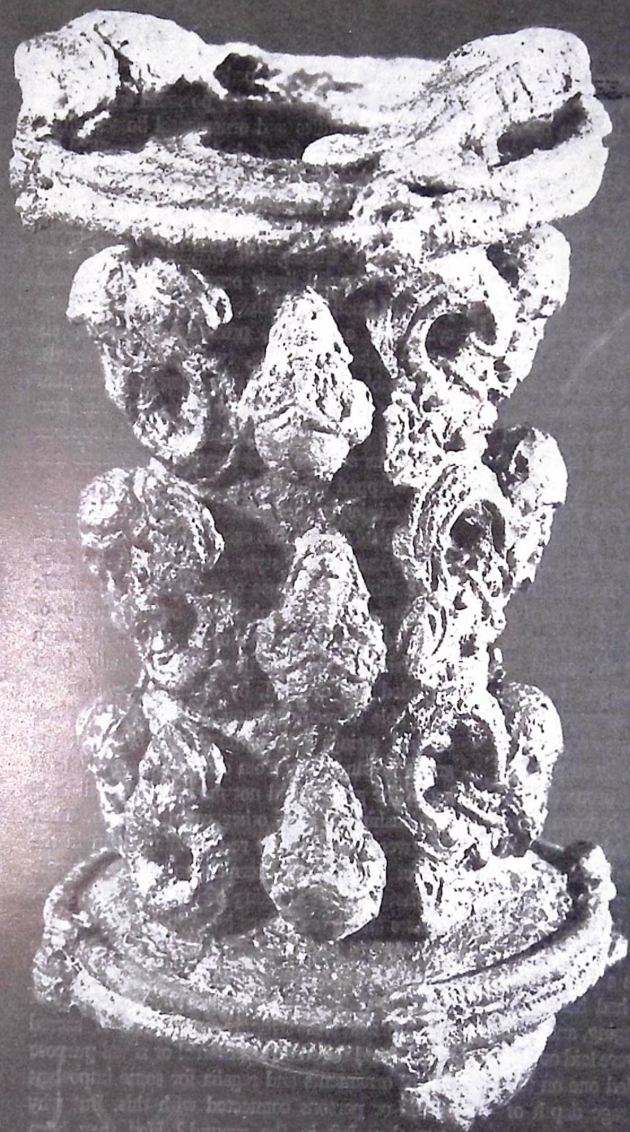


Richard Anozie's compound at Igbo-Ukwu before excavation. The floor of the burial-chamber lay over 11 feet below the surface

with them. The Antiquities Department made a note of the site as one requiring future investigation, and in 1958 invited me to excavate it. This I did for four months during the dry season of 1959–60.

The first task was to obtain permission to excavate. This was no simple matter, since the site was right inside the compound of the original finder, Isaiah Anozie; in fact it lay between the houses of his two wives, with a compound wall running down the middle. This, as well as a goat-house, would have to be demolished to make room for proper excavation, so that clearly compensation would have to be paid. This was the concern of the whole family, and discussions sometimes began at 7 in the morning and ended at 11 at night; in spite of the efforts of the District Officer it took a fortnight for the negotiations to be completed. In the course of the talks, a neighbour and relative, Richard Anozie, stated that strange things had also been encountered in the digging of a cistern in his compound, as a result of which the cistern was abandoned and filled in again; accordingly agreement was reached to dig in this compound also.

In Isaiah Anozie's compound we began digging on that part of the site furthest away from the original find spot, in order that there should be the best chance of acquainting ourselves with the type of soil on the site and the kind of stratigraphy we



Cylindrical staff ornament bronze excavated from a fill in pit at Igbo-Ukwu. It decorated with representati of curled fish and monk heads, and with two b on top and bottom. Height: inches

were likely to encounter. This we were able to do, and in the course of doing so found an iron blade and a highly decorated pot set on its own openwork stand—a feature we were later to recognize as characteristic of the ancient Igbo-Ukwu ware, and which is copied and repeated in a number of the bronzes. Then on 8th December, 1959, four days before the federal election of that year, we came across the first bronze. It so happened that this was perhaps the most remarkable one of all, a highly decorated vessel some thirteen inches high consisting of the representation in bronze of a pear-shaped water-pot set upon its own pedestal stand, and the whole enclosed in a free-standing pattern of rope-work only attached to the vessel on the shoulder and above the foot—a marvel of craftsmanship! There was so much interest and excitement over this find that for security's sake it was necessary to remove it from the ground the same day, although on archaeological grounds I would have preferred to have left it there until we could have cleared the rest of the area around it so as to see its exact relationship to any other objects there might be. But before this could be done it was necessary to have a police guard on the site, which obviously could not be arranged until after the Federal elections were over; accordingly operations on this site were temporarily suspended until this was organized. Then we proceeded to lay bare the whole area where the bronzes were until we were satisfied we had reached the outside limits of the deposit. In this way we were able to see exactly how everything was lying. Fortunately the whole of the area underneath the compound walls had remained undisturbed; we could see that the objects had been laid out in a rectangular area, approximately half of which had been dug away by Isaiah Anozie's pre-war digging, and half of which was left intact. The objects were laid out on a single level, they had not been piled one on top of another, and they were at an average depth of not more than about two feet.

The bronzes from this site, including those dug up at the original finding, consisted, in addition to the vessel already described, of six large bowls, eleven small crescentic bowls, one small pear-shaped bowl or ladle, three large bronze shells, a bowl on an openwork pedestal stand, an openwork altar stand, an annular potstand and a large number of handles and ornamental bosses which we ultimately realized had been attached to calabashes; twelve large pendant ornaments and thirteen small ones, three bells, one large chain, one small decorated chain, a composite belt, twenty-eight anklets, ten wristlets and a large quantity of small jingle ornaments (crotals) and pieces of small chain; three staff heads, four large cylindrical ornaments, probably for staffs, six spiral snake ornaments, two ornate scabbards, three scabbard supports, four hilts, and a number of other small miscellaneous objects. An iron blade lay alongside one of the scabbard supports. There was evidence that some of the vessels had been wrapped up in cloth.

In addition to the bronzes, we found a number of complete pots in the excavation, decorated in a highly ornamented style characterized by deep channelling and the use of projecting bosses. We also found large numbers of beads, mostly of coloured glass but some of carnelian. Although the strings on which they had originally been threaded had decayed, by careful excavation we were able to recover many of the beads in their original strings and patterns, by brushing the grains of sand away from each one carefully as it lay in the ground and not moving any until their relationships to each other could be seen. Then they were taken up by re-threading them in the correct order and pattern upon modern thread.

What was the meaning of this rich deposit of bronzes and other things lying in the soil in the way we had found them? This was one of the things we were most anxious to try to determine from the results of our excavation. The nature of the bronzes was strongly suggestive of sacred vessels used for some ceremonial or ritual purpose and of ornaments and regalia for some important person or persons connected with this. But why were they left in the ground? Had they been hurriedly buried in a pit for safe keeping in time of war or some threatened or realized emergency, never to be recovered after the feared disaster actually occurred? The way these objects were disposed in the ground did not in fact suggest a

A bronze pendant ornament from the repository of ritual objects; it consists of a human face showing the same pattern of scarifications as on other objects from Igbo-Ukwu. Height: 3 *inches*

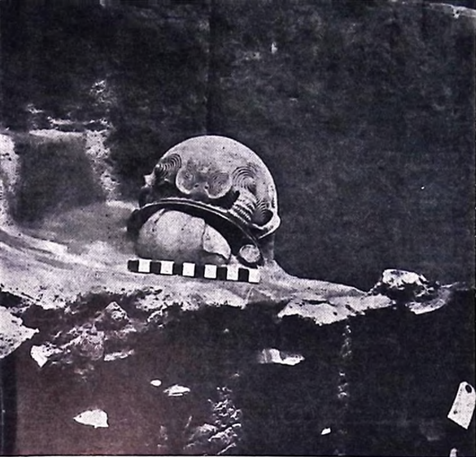
hurried burying in a pit, for the objects were spread out over a level rectangular area; moreover they were at a remarkably shallow depth below the surface of the ground. It seems more likely that they were housed in a small building devoted to the purpose, similar to the modern Ibo *obu;* there were one or two indications from the excavation that this was so, but it could not be proved, because, of course, mud walls decay away to nothing and thatch and timbers from a roof do not survive. Almost certainly the abandonment of this repository of sacred vessels and regalia was the result of some raid or disaster in warfare—it is hardly likely to have been a voluntary abandonment. The victors either feared to interfere with 'foreign gods', or else just did not notice it. In course of time the roof collapsed, the walls fell down, the bush grew over and the whole deposit became covered with a thin layer of soil.

While the excavation in Isaiah Anozie's compound was going on, at the same time work was proceeding in the neighbouring one belonging to Richard Anozie. Before we could start work here we also had to take down some compound walls and in addition remove many tons of building sand which had been stored there. The first thing we found traces of was the modern abandoned cistern, the digging of which had led us to try this site. For the man digging it, by name Nwangwu, had stopped digging when he became frightened as a result of finding 'iron, blackboards, and like cement'; the latter statement made it sound as if he had struck some building. We were easily able to pick out this abandoned cistern, as it had been filled up with beer bottles and other modern rubbish, whose generally dark colour contrasted strongly with the undisturbed red sand. In another part of the area we were digging we came across an ancient filled-in cistern, extending down to a depth of 24 feet below the surface, and containing sherds of ancient Igbo-Ukwu ware. We also found a shrine or altar, consisting of a pile of various kinds of pottery vessels of the same kind of ware, together with hundreds of little 'pegs', made up of potsherds rubbed down to the approximate shape of an elongated triangle about an inch and a half long—which were taken to be votive offerings or records of such.

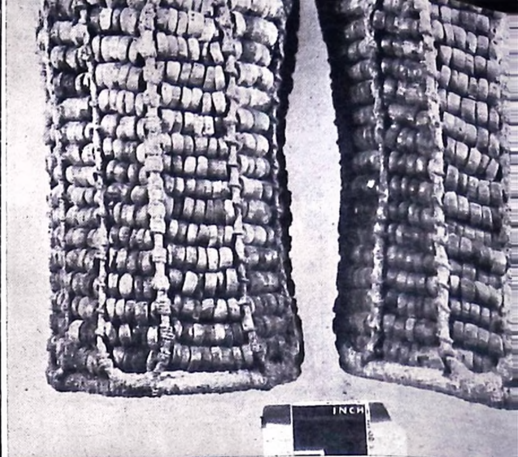
Near the part where Nwangwu's cistern had been dug, between depths of 4 feet and 8 feet, a number of beads were encountered, two copper or bronze wristlets, one of them associated with some very decayed bone, and the enamel from the teeth of not less than five individuals. For a distance below this of 1 foot 6 inches nothing was encountered, until we struck a strange-looking bronze object. It turned out to be a representation

Bronze vessel about 13 inches high excavated from the repository of ritual vessels at Igbo-Ukwu (above)

Copper coiled snake ornament from the site of the ritual objects at Igbo-Ukwu; it may have been for a ceremonial staff as it has a spike projecting through the middle. The snake has an egg in its mouth. Height: 5 inches (right)



Highly decorated pot in course of excavation from a filled-in pit at Igbo-Ukwu; most of the earth has been carefully cleared away from it, but it still remains in the exact position in which it was found



A pair of wristlets from the burial chamber at Igbo-Ukwu; they are made on frameworks of copper wire, filled in with panels of blue beads

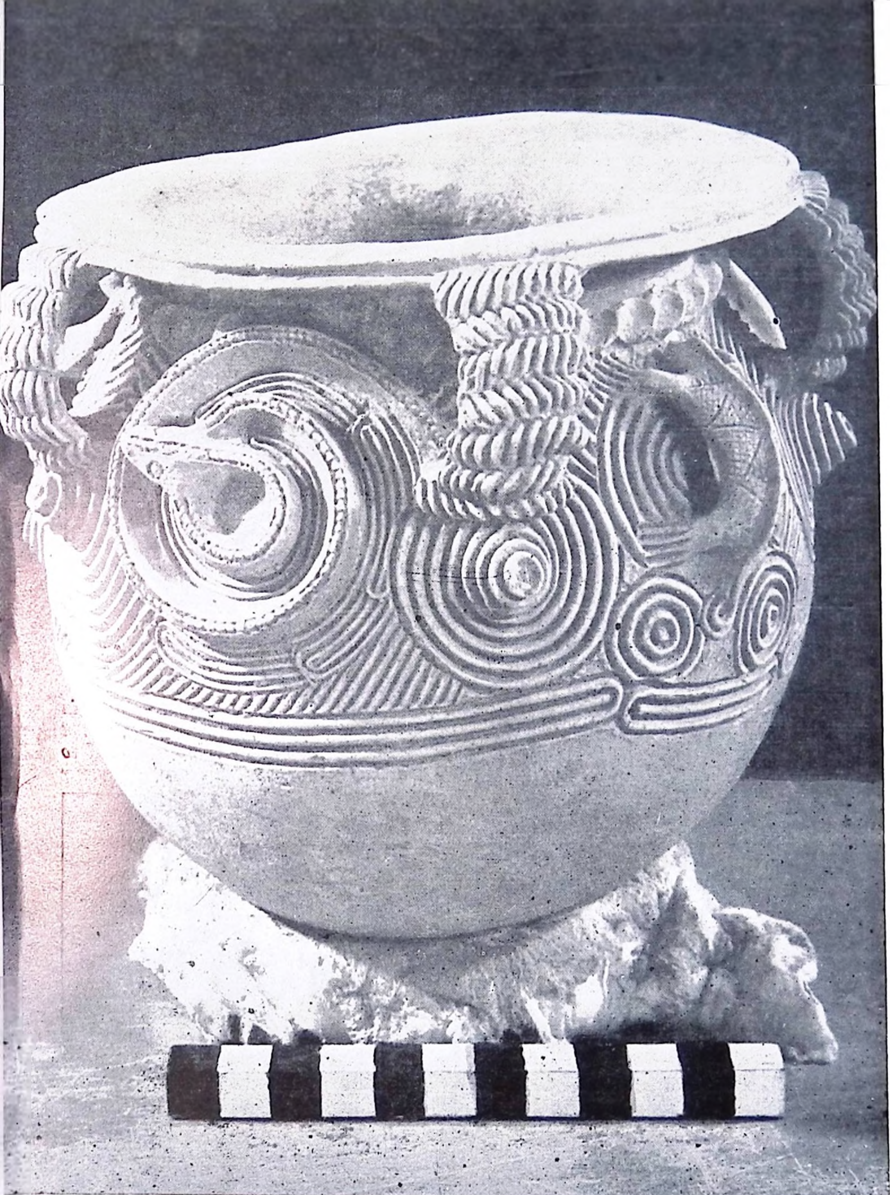
of the skull of a leopard, lying on its back and gazing upwards, but fixed to a bent metal rod which went further down into the ground. As we followed this down, we started coming upon other objects—of copper and bronze, of bone and ivory, together with pieces of iron and an abundance of beads, all tangled up together in seemingly hopeless confusion. It was our job to excavate these carefully, not merely to recover them, but also in such a way as to do our best to find an explanation of what the whole deposit signified.

There were three ivory tusks, but so decayed it was impossible to tell whether they had been carved or used as horns. In the centre was a circle about fourteen inches in diameter of spirally twisted copper bosses, with spikes protruding from them inwards and set in wood, which was preserved around the copper spikes. Eight inches below this circle was a similar circle of copper bosses set in wood, and it was concluded that they represented the top and bottom of a stool. Nearby was a skull, although the thin facial part had decayed away, and scattered around were the very decayed remains of human limb-bones, which could all have belonged to one man. The skull was completely surrounded with beads, and there was an even greater abundance of beads in this deposit than in the first one described, amounting in fact to over 100,000 in number. As many of these were in strings and patterns, which had to be slowly and carefully uncovered without disturbing them and then taken up by re-stringing on modern thread, it can be realized that it was a slow and tedious business.

Of objects in copper there was a decorated pectoral plate, with traces of some kind of carving in an organic material in the middle, a crown and various plaque ornaments, fourteen anklets and four wristlets, a large decorated handle, probably for a big calabash, together with decorative spiral bosses for it, a decorated fan-holder, two brackets on pointed rods, and a beautifully modelled bronze hilt, probably for a fly-switch, consisting of a horse and rider surmounting a decorated pommel. The floor of the deposit was at an average depth of 11 feet 3 inches below the modern surface, and in places there were traces of wooden planks where these had been preserved underneath objects of copper. As a result of the decomposition of materials in the deposit, the surrounding red sand was stained and streaked with yellow.

What did this deposit represent? The conclusion was reached that here we had the burial chamber of someone of great social importance. The chamber appeared to have been lined and floored

Cylindrical staff ornament of bronze excavated from a filled-in pit at Igbo-Ukwu. Height: 4 inches



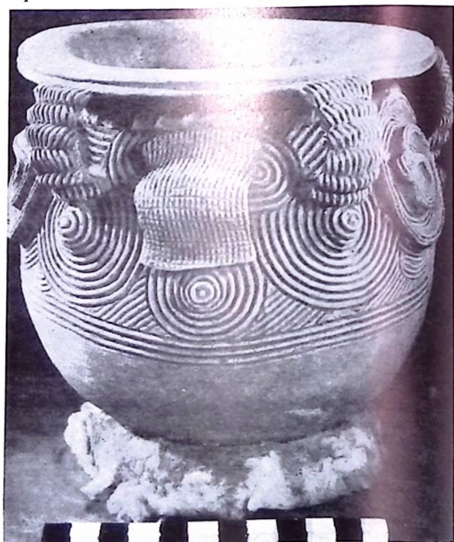
Highly decorated pot excavated from a filled-in pit at Igbo-Ukwu, showing a snake and a chameleon. The pot is 18 inches in diameter

with wooden planks joined together by iron clamps and nails, and on the floor there were traces of matting, as well as of other textiles in contact with some of the copper objects. These were the things which Nwangwu had encountered in digging his cistern, the yellow sand representing what he had reported as 'like cement'. By noting carefully the positions of the bones and all the other objects it was possible to conclude that the corpse had been buried sitting upon the stool, the arms supported by the two copper brackets and with the fan-holder and the fly-switch set in its hands, dressed in a rich array of beads and with a beaded head-dress, surmounted by a crown and with the pectoral plate suspended on its chest, and on each wrist a beautiful wristlet some 6 inches long made up of panels of blue beads set in a copper wire framework. After the corpse had been placed in position, the wooden roof was put on and above it were deposited the remains of at least five individuals—perhaps slaves despatched to accompany their lord in the next world. Then the burial pit was filled in.

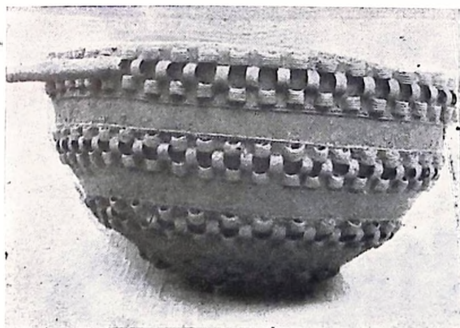
In 1964 I returned to Igbo-Ukwu on behalf of the Institute of African Studies, University of Ibadan, and excavated the area to the east of Isaiah Anozie's compound, where it had been reported to me that beads and 'a bronze table' had been dug up in the 1920's in the course of digging clay for making compound walls. This was in Jonah Anozie's compound. In excavating the area we found the outline of the old clay-pit, but also discovered that it had sliced off the top of an older pit which was twice as deep. The modern clay-pit was extensive but only had a depth of about 4½ feet and when we came across the older pit, by scraping the surface down carefully it was possible to see that this was approximately circular with a diameter of a little over 6 feet. When we excavated it we found that it extended for a depth of 4½ feet below the floor of the clay-pit, its bottom being some 9 feet below modern surface level. The form of this pit was quite unlike that of an abandoned cistern filled up with rubbish; it gave the impression of having been specially dug to receive its contents. From the section across the pit which we dug, it was possible to see alternating

Highly decorated pot excavated from a filled-in pit at Igbo-Ukwu, showing a ram's head. The pot is 18 inches in diameter (above)

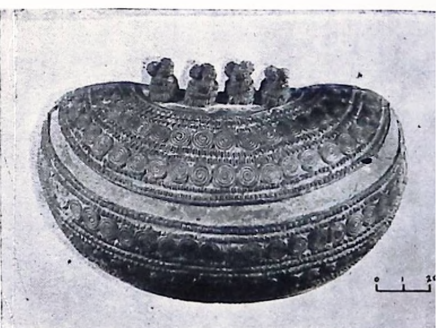
Highly decorated pot excavated from a filled-in pit at Igbo-Ukwu, showing a snake and an object not identified for certain which may be intended to represent a tortoise. The pot is 18 inches in diameter



Decorated bronze bowl from the Igbo-Ukwu repository. Its form probably copies a calabash prototype fitt with bronze bosses and a handle; this one-handled form is typical



One-handled decorated bronze bowl excavated from the repository of ritual vessels and other objects at Igbo-Ukwu. The bowl is 10 inches in diameter



Three-quarter view of one of the ritual vessels from Igbo-Ukwu showing characteristic form and decoration

Beautifully cast bronze hilt, probably for a ceremonial fly-switch, excavated from the burial chamber: a horseman on his mount stands on top of an intricately decorated pommel. Height: 6 inches

Details of the horseman surmounting the bronze hilt from the burial chamber at Igbo-Ukwu. It will be noticed that the facial scarifications follow the same pattern as those on figures on other objects from the site

Highly decorated bronze ornament; probably for the top of a ceremonial staff

Bronze staff ornament in the form of a pair of intertwined snakes with heads at both ends. Height: 6½ inches

A bronze bowl on its own pedestal stand from the repository of ritual vessels and regalia at Igbo-Ukwu

layers of red sand, rubbish and burnt material, apparently shot in from one side.

The first indication that we had reached the undisturbed contents of the ancient pit was in the form of a delicate double chain of 200 finely-wound copper wire links. Other objects of copper or bronze found in the pit included thirty-five wristlets of several different patterns, two small bells, six cylindrical ornaments, probably for staffs, a long pointed rod, a large jingle ornament (crotal) and various other miscellaneous pieces. A great quantity of broken pottery had been thrown into the pit, as well as a number of complete vessels, the largest and finest of which was a remarkable example of ceramic art. In form it is a big open-mouthed water-pot some eighteen inches in diameter, decorated with the characteristic ancient Igbo-Ukwu style of deep channelling and projecting bosses. In addition it has five large strap-like handles extending from the rim to the shoulder, decorated in imitation of basketry, and between each of these the shoulder of the pot is decorated with models in relief of a snake, a ram's head, another snake, a chameleon and a mysterious-looking rectangular hatched object, humped up in the middle, which might be meant to represent a

tortoise. Also in the pit were many traces of burnt and decayed bone, none of which on examination proved to be human but of which the majority were of duiker or antelope.

What do the contents of this pit represent? It seems rather harder to interpret than the other two Igbo-Ukwu sites. The contents of the pit are unlike those of an ordinary domestic or industrial rubbish dump. Is it connected with the same act of warfare as, or with one similar to, that which caused the abandonment of the first site described? Does this pit material, then, represent the work of cleaning up a destroyed building and its contents when life got going again in the area? This is a possibility, but perhaps a more likely explanation is intentional disposal of a collection of ritual and ceremonial objects, possibly following the burning down of a shrine house. This could have been for a number of reasons: a change of religion, as when Christian converts abandon and destroy their former 'pagan idols'; a case of witchcraft; or merely the routine disposal of goods which were the insignia of a man's personal titles and which no one else would be justified in using after his death. There is one curious and puzzling feature, which is that, of the duiker and antelope bones identified, none came from the skull but all from ribs or legs, which one would have thought more characteristic of domestic than of ritual remains.

How old are the objects from these three sites at Igbo-Ukwu? Dating archaeological remains is very often one of the most difficult tasks of archaeology. In the absence of written records or inscriptions, or of datable imports from other cultures, or even of oral traditions, there is not much to go on. At one time it was said that the Igbo-Ukwu remains could not be very old because of the preservation of cloth, but this is not necessarily true since its close association with copper objects, inhibiting termite and bacterial activity, would have acted as a preservative. One might hope to discover the source and date of the glass beads

Bronze ritual vessel in the shape of a shell surmounted by a leopard from the repository at Igbo-Ukwu; it is about 8 inches long

A cylindrical open-work altar stand in bronze from the Igbo-Ukwu repository, showing the sid which portrays a male figure. Just under 12 inches high

and while there is an interesting suggestion from one authority that many of them came from India, sufficient is not known about such beads to be able to state anything with any great certainty. There remains a method of dating presented to archaeology by the physical sciences, known as radiocarbon dating. This depends for its operation upon calculations based on the radioactive decay of an isotope of carbon, Carbon 14. It is not possible here to go into the details of how this works, but suffice it to say that radiocarbon dates are not exact, like historically recorded dates. They are statistical estimates, and there are various possible sources of error, so that not much attention can be paid to an isolated radiocarbon date unless there is other archaeological evidence to confirm it. On the other hand, where pairs or constellations of radiocarbon dates are obtained which confirm each other and are not positively contradicted by other archaeological evidence, they have proved remarkably useful and reliable in dating otherwise undated finds. Two such dates have been obtained at Igbo-Ukwu. Wood from the stool in the burial chamber was dated to A.D. 850 ± 120 and charcoal from the pit in the last excavation described to A.D. 840 ± 145. If hese are taken to be independent estimates of the ame actual age, and since these two dates are omething of a confirmation of each other, it leans that there are two chances in three that the ctual date falls between approximately A.D. 750 id 940, nineteen chances in twenty that it falls etween the limits A.D. 660–1040, and only ree chances in a thousand that it falls outside e range A.D. 560–1130.

It is inviting to associate the finds at Igbo-Ukwu h the institution of the *Eze Nri*, the priest king he Umueri clan of the Ibos. Especially is this so e the site is quite close to Oreri, which is the y other place besides Aguku to have an *Eze Nri*. e material remains found at Igbo-Ukwu appear have certain things in common with what is wn about the practices associated with the itution of *Eze Nri*, but there are also certain ceable differences—which are perhaps to be unted for as changes which have come about he institution during the passage of many centuries, if we can rely on the radiocarbon date.

It is impossible to say for certain at present whether the makers of the objects discovered at Igbo-Ukwu were the ancestors of the present-day people there or not. Certain it is that they were artists and craftsmen of a very high order. It is likely that the technique of casting bronze and brass by the *cire perdue*, or 'lost wax', method was introduced to the West African forest area following the opening up of trans-Saharan caravan routes from North Africa by the Arabs; as a result, probably at different dates, indigenous 'schools' and centres of casting arose in such places as Ivory Coast, Ashanti, Dahomey, Ife, Benin and Bamenda. The Igbo-Ukwu finds represent a very separate and distinct style from other West African bronzes; whether they were actually cast at Igbo-Ukwu we do not know; we have so far found no traces of bronze casting on the spot, and there are hints that influences may have come from further north or east. An interesting question concerns the source of the

A cylindrical open-work stand in bronze from the Igbo-Ukwu repository showing the side which portrays a female figure. Just under 12 *inches high*

raw material, because there is no copper in Nigeria. It seems, therefore, that this must have come by trade from North Africa or those centres in the Sahara which were anciently exploited for copper. What is of considerable interest is that analysis of the objects from Igbo-Ukwu shows that the *cire perdue* cast objects are made of a leaded bronze, that is, an alloy of copper and tin with a considerable quantity of lead—whereas the well-known Benin 'bronzes' are in fact practically all 'brasses', that is, alloys of copper and zinc. This suggests that the Igbo-Ukwu bronze-casters were obtaining their supply of raw materials from a different source from that which the Benin casters used. Since Benin casting is known to extend back into the fifteenth or fourteenth century, perhaps this is some confirmation of the earlier date of the Igbo-Ukwu pieces, since, although on different sides of the Niger, Benin and Igbo are only a hundred miles apart.

Another interesting feature discovered from the analyses of the Igbo-Ukwu material was that objects made by smithing, chasing and hammering were made of almost pure copper, while leaded bronze was used for the cast objects. Now copper is easier to work by smithing and chasing than is bronze, whereas leaded bronze is much easier to cast. This suggests a much greater knowledge of

Excavation in progress at the site of the repository of ritual vessels and regalia, some of which can be see in the ground

metallurgy on the part of the ancient craftsmen than they have hitherto been credited with, it being said that they melted down whatever 'yellow metal' they had to hand.

The excavations at Igbo-Ukwu have posed almost as many questions as they have solved—but that is often the way in archaeology—and in many kinds of research. It is to be hoped that more archaeological work in Nigeria will help to solve some of the problems raised. Primarily it is information about the past for which archaeologists seek in their work but, as in the case of Igbo-Ukwu, they are often dependent on non-archaeologists for the original finding of a site. Therefore the more people are aware of the importance of finds of potential archaeological significance likely to furnish such information, and the more they realize their responsibility to report finds to experts in the Department of Antiquities or in a University, the more likely it is that archaeological information will be preserved and recovered. However, no untrained person should carry out an excavation, since this must be done by special techniques in order to recover the maximum amount of information from it. Archaeologists do not primarily seek for treasure or for art objects to put in museums—but if in seeking information they find such things, then it is rather a nice bonus! It does not often fall to the lot of an archaeologist in the course of a lifetime of digging to excavate such a rich site as Igbo-Ukwu, and I feel privileged to have had the opportunity.

Even if the technique of *cire perdue* casting was initially learnt from outside, of one thing I am satisfied—and that is that the wonderful craftsmanship of the Igbo-Ukwu bronzes, perhaps the oldest in Nigeria—and indeed in all sub-Saharan Africa—was carried out in an African society, under a social and economic organization of Africans, almost certainly by Africans, and that it owed nothing to European tutelage.

What a fortunate discovery was Isaiah Anozie's, and how it adds yet further lustre and depth to the riches of Nigeria's cultural heritage!

MONEY

Money, to some, is the root of all evil
It remains to others, a honeying devil;
Devilish or no, it's an indispensable evil.
That it is a good servant is known to all
It's being a bad master is to be proved by all
Both poor and rich alike know it to fall.
The hardship of getting it everybody knows
The ease of spending it everybody vows
With the love of acquiring it every child grows.
Little or much, it beats striking a mean
As few are wasteful and the majority mean
Using it well or badly, only the wise can wean!

A. K. M.

LIBRARY

An irreplaceable wealth is a collection of books
That does not care a damn for your looks
Nor give a thought to what is in your box.
Much that you horde by way of wealth
Is a perishable pile and transitory wealth
Against what you get from books as wealth.
Money flies, livestock dies and property mortgaged
But your selection of books is perpetually salvaged
With them endless generations sage as you saged.
The money you amass or what else you accumulate
As you bit by bit did greedily misappropriate
So gladly and quickly will your heirs dissimulate.
And the last sin of all—according to sacred books
In the life hereafter you will be caught by hellish hooks
For being so crooked as to court consuming crooks!

TEWFIQ ABDULLAH

OGUN

Him it was I saw,
Ogun, the god of Iron,
swimming in a bath of blood,
A garb of steel he wore
all deluged with human blood,
Ogun look good at me, for
him you look bad at,
the blood of him you sap
Ogun to you this morn I call
make my life a life of joy.

TUNDE LAWAL

AMBIGUOUS MEETING

TIRESOME I come now in the heat of afternoon
Where you in your rhythm and melody
Of kindness as with water
Cool me and calm me with the stir of breezes;
I dare not look you long in the eyes—
You have grown suddenly dear.

Cool me, calm me; raise with your answering smile
Hope, swift stranger, you are content as I
We are at home together
In the house this quiet hour . . .
Queen of the summer earth and grey wild rain,
Near with the skies my heartbreak.

Say that I came instead by night until the flush
Of morning: rhythm of wind and water girl,
Light-limbed and honey-tongued,
Would you find me haven?
The threat of storm is clearing fast out there
and the sun strikes low—here
From the walls your blessing, Love,
Light thunders; I should go.

PETER THOMAS

HUMANITY

It is Humanity's most unfortunate lot
To deride their next of kin of a different lot
For other colours they haven't got.
A pitiful thing that Adam and Eve
Who were our proginators—by your leave
Never foresaw the sin they were to leave.
It is for the multi-coloured gentry living today
By Culture, Education and Tolerance in their day
To respect God's creatures—come what may.
A fact we cannot change, we must tolerate
And live and let live peacefully at any rate
For what's done is done—and we can't derate!

ABBA KANO

Nigeria Magazine

Literary Supplement

HAVE YOU
DISCOVERED
ART IN NIGERIA?

'NIGERIA' MAGAZINE
ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION
(4 ISSUES)
8s LOCAL, 12s OVERSEAS

NIGERIA'S
FIRST
EDUCATIONAL, CULTURAL
AND
LITERARY MAGAZINE

BACK ISSUES AVAILABLE

PHONE: 26592, 20643, 23134

BOOKS

TRANSITIONAL HISTORY

Southern Nigeria in Transition 1885-1906. *By* J. C. Anene, *Cambridge University Press*, 45*s*.

Most Nigerians have rightly criticized the earlier histories of Nigeria by British colonial administrators. These histories had tended to identify British activity in Nigeria with Nigerian history, thus implying that Nigerian history began with the arrival of Europeans in the country. Unfortunately, some of the first Nigerian academic historians have also concentrated attention on writing histories of European activity, possibly with the object of tackling the colonial historians on their own ground. Thus Professor Anene's *Southern Nigeria in Transition* 1885–1906, a follow-up of Dr K. O. Dike's *Trade and Politics in the Niger Delta* 1830–1885, is concerned more with changes in British policy and action than with changes in the Nigerian societies comprised in the territory covered by the study.

The author does attempt to expose the anomalies of British policy. But since his material is drawn principally from records created by the British themselves, even the possibilities of this approach are limited. The pull of the records is so great that the author has not been able, in fact, to free himself completely from the prejudices they contain. Thus the concepts behind such expressions as 'native,' 'savage,' 'barbarian,' and 'cannibal' keep cropping up in the study to an extent not justified by their historical significance.

The lack of an adequate indigenous framework or background is due in great part to the low priority accorded oral traditional sources. Oral tradition is, according to the bibliography, accepted by the author, 'with important qualifications.' It is clear, in fact, that the qualifications are more important here than the acceptance. Whereas the written sources are listed in minute detail, not even the manuscripts of oral tradition submitted by local historians have been listed for the guidance of other scholars—in spite of the fact that the local historians concerned may have given up their manuscripts only in the belief that they were to be published and made available to the public. At page 249 the author does, indeed, declare his rejection of oral tradition, 'All in all it is impossible to sift fact from fiction in these traditions, and no people have voluntarily painted their past history in colours of cowardice and ignominy.' It may be pointed out that the 'reason' given for the rejection of oral tradition here applies as strongly to written records. The author's own analysis of British documents reveals that they do not always paint a true picture. Obviously people do not change their nature simply because they are able to preserve their past in writing rather than in their memory.

We have to realize that to reject oral tradition as *impossible* of analysis amounts in many areas to an admission that the African past is impossible of reconstruction. It would be to admit that it is impossible to ascertain the African past prior to the period of European activity and records—beyond what the archaeologists may be able to salvage of African prehistory.

The effect of reliance on foreign records is seen in conclusions such as the following: that the 1897 attack on Benin was inevitable and 'an act of humanity,' because the rulers of Benin 'seemed to have devoted most of their time to human sacrifice.' A similar conclusion is reached concerning the Aro expedition—that it produced 'nothing but good,' since the Aro had sponsored the Abam raids on their neighbours—in spite of an earlier statement that 'the role of the Aro in Ibo and Ibibio affairs was grossly exaggerated.' These statements clearly misrepresent the past of the communities concerned and merely echo ideas contained in the British sources.

A particularly large amount of mistaken generalization has been included on the Ijo communities of the delta. At pages 7 and 9 the Ibani of Bonny are wrongly named Ibeno. There is also no evidence presented for the views, first, that the Ijo were confined to the delta by Ibo pressure; and second, that the Ijo were 'the result of the mingling of diverse elements.' It is stated in doubtful confirmation that Ibo and Ijo are regarded as 'native tongues' in Okrika (p. 7).

A contribution has been made to our knowledge of the Nigerian past in a number of instances where a limited use has been made of local sources. These

include the assessment of the nature of Aro influence, and the extent of Jaja's influence over the Opobo trading area. But this great man's reputation does not require the exaggeration (p. 55) that he was heading for 'control' of the other delta states, and eventually of 'the whole of Eastern Nigeria.' The truth is that the delta states observed conventions of arbitration by neighbouring friendly rulers in interstate and even internal affairs. The instances cited of Jaja's relations with some of these states fall within this frame of reference.

I wish to conclude with an appeal to Nigerian historians. The time has come to change from a Nigerian history viewed largely as one of British action and Nigerian reaction to one treating of the actions and predicament of Nigerians in Nigeria—and perhaps even overseas in the New World and elsewhere. A select group of historians has already accepted the challenge posed by the difficulties (*not* impossibility) of the local sources.

E. J. ALAGOA

AFRICANA

The Study of Africa, 444 *pp. By* PETER J. M. McEWAN and ROBERT B. SUTCLIFFE. *Methuen & Co. Ltd.*, 42s.

West Africa, 543 *pp. By* R. J. HARRISON CHURCH, *Longmans*, 60s.

Modern African Stories, 227 *pp. By* ELLIS A. KOMEY and EZEKIEL MPHAHLELE (*Editors*). *Faber and Faber*, 8s-6d.

PRIMARILY 'to help university students and teachers who are concerned with the study of Africa, either from the disciplinary or the general point of view' and 'for a greater understanding of some of the major issues, facing this continent on the part of the intelligent layman who lacks the stimulus of examinations or the guidance of experts', Editors P. J. McEwan and R. B. Sutcliffe included, in *The Study of Africa*, contributions from no less than thirty-seven experts on Africa in addition to writing linking notes and commentaries themselves.

Africa's Physical Environment, Traditional Background and Contemporary Scene are all described in thirty-nine chapters by these experts who include names (familiar to Nigerian readers) such as Simeon and Phoebe Ottenberg (on 'Social Groupings'); Daryll Forde (on 'African Modes of Thinking'); E. W. Smith (on 'African Ideas of God'); T. O. Elias (on 'Government and Politics in Africa'); Kenya's Jomo Kenyatta (on 'the Economic Life of the Gikuyu'); James Coleman (on 'Nationalism in Tropical Africa') and (with David Apter) (on 'Pan-Africanism or Nationalism?'); Thomas Hodgkin (on 'Welfare Activities of African Political Parties') and Colin Legum (on 'Modern Political Ideas').

While there is no chapter (a name I would prefer to 'contribution' since all but one of them have been reprinted from an earlier source) that is uninteresting or uninformative the most appealing ones to African readers generally would appear to be the last in the book—'Pan Africanism or Nationalism?' and 'Modern Political Ideas' the latter of which contains, for instance, the different interpretations given to the vexatious 'non-alignment' by Presidents Modeibo Keita, Osman of Somalia, Nnamdi Azikiwe, Ben Youssef Ben Kedda, Kwame Nkrumah, Gamal Abdul Nasser, Abboud of the Sudan, Sekou Toure, Bourguiba of Tunisia, the late Sylvanus Olympio of Togo as well as Prime Minister of Nigeria, the late Alhaji Sir Abubakar Tafawa Balewa, Julius Nyerere and crowned by the King of Morocco.

With Julius Nyerere giving the longest interpretation to 'African Personality' other African leaders, politicians and thinkers give their definitions of that ambiguous term as well as 'Neo-Colonialism,' 'Balkanization,' 'African Democracy,' 'Democracy by Discussion' (about which the laconic late Tafawa Balewa could only say 'Democracy is essentially government by *discussion*....'). The pros and cons of 'The One Party State' on which Dr N. Azikiwe's being quoted as saying:

'Unless an Opposition, as a 'Shadow Cabinet' which is capable of replacing the Government, exists democracy becomes a sham. ... Failure to tolerate the existence of an Opposition Party would be disastrous to the existence of democracy'—is, if not the most prophetic, certainly not the least interesting: considering that the article, in which that quotation appears, was

originally published in 1962 and reprinted in this book in 1965 and although we are not told when, in fact, Zik said that!

Also contained in *The Study of Africa* are five maps showing Africa (*i*) physical, with political boundaries; (*ii*) its social divisions; (*iii*) as it was in 1945; (*iv*) as it was in 1964 and (*v*) its mineral distribution and communications.

Finally Editors Peter J. M. McEwan (Research Associate and Director of Family Research Unit, Harvard) and Robert B. Sutcliffe (Assistant Research Officer, University of Oxford Institute of Economics and Statistics)—according to their own 'Notes on Contributors'—have themselves read far beyond the thirty-seven experts and consequently added more to the usefulness of the book by providing also Appendices on 'Some African statistics and data' and 'Economic Assistance to African Countries' as well as a Bibliography and a ten-page Index.

WEST AFRICA AT A GLANCE

From reading experts on Africa and African experts speaking about themselves, their countries and what they think of the world in general, we come now to a more detailed study of that part of Africa, which 'has been in contact with the outside world longer than any other part of Africa South of the Sahara' in the next book—*West Africa.*

'No other area of Africa has undergone such profound political, economic and social changes as have taken place recently in West Africa'. On this account it is the view of Dr R. J. Harrison Church (who is the Professor of Geography in the University of London) that no 'apology is necessary, therefore, for this attempt to provide a modern and comprehensive study of West Africa, based on seven years of wide reading in scattered literature in several languages, and on very extensive field work throughout the area'.

The mere fact that within two years of first publication (1957) the book had a Russian edition in 1959 and gone into a fifth edition in 1966 in addition to not only being included in the 'Geographies for Advanced Study' Series (Edited by Professor S. H. Beaver) but also to be the second from seventeen that came out in that series can all combine to show how modern and comprehensive the book is.

West Africa is divided into three parts, the first dealing 'with the natural conditions in West Africa and with some of the human problems which these present.' The second 'analyses man's work in agriculture, livestock holding, mining and the provision of transport, as well as the distribution of man himself, which often but not always results from these activities.' The third examines 'the individual countries, after a general review of their contrasted character and situation'.

The author dedicates the book 'to the peoples of West Africa and to all who have their welfare at heart,' and the reviewer's appreciation of this excellent book is summed up in the following tabulated form of encyclopaedic knowledge collated from the book, the initial idea for which, Dr Church tells us, 'came from (the late) Professor Sir Dudley Stamp....'

As much emphasis and fears are placed on size of regions in Nigeria to the utter disregard of the other great overriding factors such as population, the order followed below is from the smallest to the greatest in land area. (*see* p. 82)

Tabulation cannot tell all. If you want to know, for instance, which country larger than Nigeria has only six towns that have over 3,000 people or how, when and why Sierra Leone, Liberia, Fernando Po or Annobon came by these names you must read the book itself which is highly entertaining and informative being profusely illustrated with photographs, maps, drawings and the indispensable Index.

With Lord Hailey's monumental work *An African Survey* with a quotation from which, in fact, Dr Church concludes his survey of West Africa, and Smith Hempstone's magnificent book *The New Africa*, (*Faber and Faber*, 1961, 45*s*) any reader interested in Africa and the African has a comprehensive set of Africana which can only be revised but not equalled or surpassed

Country	Area in Sq. miles	Population	Date	Density Sq. mile
Annobon (Island)	6.6	1,415	1960	
Principe (Island)	42	4,605	1960	173
Sao Tome (Island)	330	58,880	1960	
Fernando Po	779	33,497	1960	
The Gambia	4,008	315,486	1963	
Portuguese Guinea	13,948	519,229	1960	
Togo	22,002	1,630,000	1965	
Sierra Leone	27,925	2,183,000	1963	78
Liberia	43,000	1,010,000	1962	20 av.
Dahomey	44,684	2,260,000	1965	
Senegal	76,104	3,270,000	1965	
Ghana..	92,100	6,727,000	1960	72.6
Guinea	94,901	2,900,000	1961	30
The Upper Volta	105,811	4,720,000	1965	
The Ivory Coast	127,471	3,830,000	1965	
Fed. of Nigeria..	356,669	55,670,000	1963	156.1
Mauritania	419,121	1,000,000	1965	
The Niger	458,874	3,260,000	1965	
Mali	464,752	4,100,000	1965	90
(For all West African Territories)	2,352,528	93,593,112		

AFRICAN KAI LUNGS AND SCHEHERAZADES

After reading this thorough description of nineteen countries of West Africa it is a great relief to read African story-tellers all over Black Africa in the last book—*Modern African Stories.*

The book contains a selection of twenty-five stories from African fiction writers, novelists and poets. Stories written, for instance, in their different idioms, styles and ways by C. A. Aidoo, K. Annan, Ato Bedwei, P. K. Buahin, A. Caseley-Hayford and Ellis Komey of Ghana ('Cut Me A Drink,' 'Ding-Dong Bell,' 'Me and the Fish God,' 'This is Experience Speaking,' 'Mista Courifer' and 'I Can Face You'); others told by James Ngugi and Grace Ogot of Kenya ('A Meeting in the Dark' and 'The Rain Came'); Chinua Achebe, Cyprian Ekwensi, Nkem Nwankwo, Gabriel Okara, David Owoyele and Amos Tutuola of Nigeria ('Death of a Boy,' 'A Stranger from Lagos,' 'The Gambler,' 'The Crooks,' 'The Will of Allah' and 'Feather Woman of the Jungle') as also by William Conton, R. Sarif Easmon, Eldred Jones and A. Nicol of Sierra Leone ('The Blood in the Wash Basin,' 'Koya,' 'A Man Can Try' and 'The Judge's Son') and Alex La Guma, Alfred Hutchinson, James Mathews, Casey Motsisi, Ezekiel Mphahlele, Richard Rive and Can Themba of South Africa ('Coffee for the Road,' 'Machado,' 'The Second Coming,' 'On The Beat,' 'Grieg on a Stolen Piano,' 'Rain' and 'The Dube Train').

Chinua Achebe's story is from his *Things Fall Apart;* Alfred Hutchinson's from his *Road to Ghana* and Amos Tutuola's from his book of the same title. The stories told by Aidoo, Jones, Komey and Mathews all originally appeared in the *Flamingo* Magazine, while those by Annan, Motsisi and Nwankwo were first read in the (B.B.C.) *Radio Times, Drum* and *Black Orpheus*

respectively and Radio Ghana and its listeners had the first benefit of hearing Peter Buahin's 'This is Experience Speaking' which, with Ato Bedwei's 'Me and the Fish God,' are amongst the most interesting.

It was only on the insistance of the publishers that the co-editor E. Mphahlele included his story 'Grieg on a Stolen Piano,' which, portraying white-black relationships in South Africa is, not surprisingly, the longest in the collection.

Nigerian readers, no doubt, are already familiar with Mphahlele's stories right from his books *Down Second Avenue*, Faber and Faber, 1959, 18s. (reviewed in *Nigeria* Magazine in 1960 (*No.* 64) and *The Living and the Dead and Other Stories* published by the Ministry of Education, Ibadan, which the present reviewer had occasion to review in 1961 (*Nigeria* Magazine No. 71).

A. A. K. METTEDEN

Blackie's Infant Bookshelf in three series of 20 booklets. *By* J. TAYLOR and T. INGLEBY *Blackie and Son Limited. 5s–6d a set.*

The idea of an infant Bookshelf will not occur to many but to only the creative mind. This is the first thing that strikes anyone who sees the three sets of twenty booklets written by Jenny Taylor and Terry Ingleby for 'Blackie's Infant Bookshelf'.

Because these booklets are some of the best results you can find in the efforts of people co-operating to achieve a special goal, you can't help being attracted by their sight. Despite the fact that they are written for kiddies of the kindergarten age, adults may still increase their knowledge of some modern discoveries by reading through and looking closely at the well illustrated coloured pages.

For example in the first five booklets that make the first set called 'First Grade Set IA' familiar animals like a goat and a monkey are made important objects while their actions, food and relationship with the little-growing-man are focused. The other two books whose main concern were to treat the Hamster, a small rat-like creature; and the hedgehog, a little bigger but whose thistles instead of furs are the objects of these books.

The next set of five booklets speaks of civic duties with pictures in the same appealing way. With its title 'Be kind to Animals, to Father, to old people and to children.' Jenny and Terry with their book-illustrator, Will and Nickless craftly take the young learner through the type of treatment a lost child needs, the old people need and so on. As a little child for whom the booklets are addressed, you not only learn the difficulties of these set of people in colourful pictures and in black and white, but you learn your duties towards them. In Nigeria, where the civic duties are rarely given any premium, this set of booklets will go a long way to give any ignorant person all the knowledge he needs if he happens to be faced with the problems of the aged or the nursing mother. The next five books after 'First Grade are Set IIA' and Set IIIA.

It makes the young one see at a glance, what a career like shopkeeping, the hairdressing, the tending the sick, the space-manship and the Ballet dancing need in the form of make-up and materials.

Every aspect of the visual aid at the disposal of a nursery-book-writer is used to drive the messages home. These three sets of books are not new in the world market, but certainly are new to the Nigerian market.

But since Nigeria is second-to-none in their quest for education, progressive Nursery Schools and Primary Schools will find these booklets an asset to learning English and in their bid to catch up with modern general knowledge. This is obvious from the illustrations which can be neatly pasted up on cardboards to hang on the walls, or used with blackboard illustrations. The children would not like to miss these sets among their comics once their eyes met them on the bookshop shelf.

Barring the fact that Blackies Infant Bookshelf set o[f] twenty books have U.K. as the background from which all the inspirations are drawn, the messages in the book-lets are of universal concern. Rarely do people wh[o] treat similar subjects achieve their aim within simila[r] limited scope. Jenny Taylor and Terry Ingleby's lon[g] teaching experience is shared here with everyone wh[o] wishes to learn.

PAT AJAYI

Kinsman and Foreman *By* T. M. ALUKO. *Heinmann Educational Books Ltd.* 203 *pp.* 18*s.*

Kinsman and Foreman is Mr Aluko's third novel. [It] was published in December, 1966. This light novel ho[lds] the attention of the reader to the last sentence. T[he] reader is anxious to know the details of the st[ory]

YORUBA IJALA

[illegible] Form of Yoruba Ijala *By* Dr S. A. [illegible] University *Press*, 70*s*

[illegible] CONTENT AND FORM OF YORUBA [illegible] vital contribution and the first [illegible] efficiently and scholarly with an [illegible] verbal art. In fact Dr Babalola sets out [illegible] things in this book:

(a) to correct the idea that 'the beginning of African literature coincides with the introduction of literacy to African communities';

(b) to offer further proof of the existence of unwritten literature, *i.e.*, 'oral literature in pre-literate society';

(c) to correct 'the impression that African literature consists of nothing but prose narratives in which tales about Tortoise and Spider loom large,' and finally

(d) to prove that 'poetry is as important as prose, if not more important, in African traditional oral literature.'

This book falls into three sections.

The first 84 pages give a general background to IJALA: the training and pupillage of Ijala chanters, its historical and sociological significance and the literary devices utilized by Ijala chanters. In this section, Dr Babalola points out to the joy of the African and to the dismay of those who think very little of our poetry that African traditional literature is rich in literary effects and that in this, it compares favourably with the literature of literate peoples.

The second section, pages 84–343, is a collection of different pieces of Ijala verses. Some relate to birds like the bushfowls, some to animals like the elephant, the duiker and the buffallo while others relate to plants like the cassava plant. The rest are salutes to certain lineages like the Onikoyi, Olufe and Olowu.

Dr Babalola makes a breath-group of Ijala chant into a line and attempts a line to line translation into English. The translations show nothing but a mastery of the English and Yoruba languages. Also, in the setting of the book, the translations of the verses are directly opposite the original Yoruba and this fact makes reference easy.

The third section is the Appendix: 'The characteristic features of the outer form'. This deals with the rules of Ijala rhythm compared with normal speech. Here Dr Babalola deals with syllable structure, stressed and unstressed syllables as well as an incidental allusion to some dialectal features of the areas from which the Ijala chants have been collected. It is fine that Dr Babalola does not call this section 'some linguistic features of Ijala' for his approach is traditional rather than the modern thoroughgoing linguistic approach based on phonology. This is probably why he has put it into an appendix for it can hardly interest the layman reader, nor can it impress the specialist linguist who is likely to consider it inadequate. But this is not to detract from its value, for it does give a good insight into certain features of form of Yoruba traditional poetry.

On the whole, this book gives the lead in the collection and preservation of whatever is left of our traditional oral literature. The second section should be studied as Yoruba Classics by our children. This section further points out that with intensive research work in our Universities, more materials for study will be discovered and the pessimism in some quarters that the Yoruba language cannot go beyond its present stage will be dispelled. This book should find a place of honour in public and school libraries as well as in the private libraries of the educated Yoruba. The book will be found useful in the early years of degree work in Yoruba and also when our governments approve Yoruba as one of the subjects for the Higher School Certificate Examinations. Because of the variety of topics treated, class-teachers of Yoruba will find extracts from the book very useful.

Dr Babalola deserves our congratulations for the good job he has done in giving us something to be proud of. We do hope that within the forseeable future we shall see the Yoruba extracts published separately in a cheap edition, for the price of seventy shillings (70*s*) is likely to put off the average man.

P. O. OGUNBOWALE

AFRICAN AND EUROPEAN DANCE*

By Renato Berger

THE SITUATION OF THE DANCE IN EUROPE

IN modern Europe, the dance is divided into classical ballet artistic and creative and social dance known as ballroom dancing which is a form of entertainment. This division is the confirmation of progressive development of the dance from its origin, and as it exists in Africa today, the dance having a definite function, either within a religious context or within a traditional society.

As far as its development is concerned, the first question that comes to one's mind is where do we start? The dance is as old as humanity itself and the motives behind its origin are: adoration; imitation, and fertility. In other words the dance in the history of mankind was religious and closely connected with the magico-religious ritual of indigenous peoples.

Emerging from the agricultural phase, manifested in the high culture of China, Japan, India, Egypt and Greece with their differentiated and developed social structures, the dance slowly changed its religious functions and became a pure entertainment like Formal dances at Royal Courts, the more popular one in the communal centres where all can participate. Religious dances were confined to the temples. In the Middle Ages in Europe, the dance as entertainment, acrobats, tricksters and jugglers were included in the formal ones of the Royal Courts. It was the Christians who divided the dance into sacred and profane, the latter they rejected and forbade.

In the Renaissance period the strong orientation towards Greece and antiquity led to a revival of the dance, but as this epoch was oriented to a very large extent towards secular pleasures, the dance was cut off from its religious roots and became a pure form or the symbol of what it had been before. Even its gestures and movements degenerated into pure indications, for instance, movements or erotic character hitherto expressed in a very direct way changed into the light touch of hands or other gestures of more or less indicative character. This form of dance, very much stylized, cultivated and revered called for the sturdy to master it.

In the so-called bourgeois epoch, the dance developed a more popular character, as for instance in country and folk-dances. Classical ballet originated from the Royal Court during the reigns of Louis XIV and XV of France. It developed out of different forms—cessions, reviews, pantomimes—which in the beginning hardly had a resemblance to ballet. At its zenith, classical ballet spread over the whole world. At that time, it had a most precise style, technique and indications in French which were understood in the whole world; moreover dance academies arose, followed by copious literature on the dance and dancers such as BEAUCHAMP, PECOUR, LE FEUILLET, RAMEAU, DUPRE, NOVERRE, VESTRIS became world renowned. The culmination point was reached in the nineteenth century, and with it came different developments and new aspects, as for instance the Russian Ballet of DIAGHILEW.

During the period of Enlightenment that came with the discovery of the New World, the advance of technical industrialization, and the revolution of the masse against the secularization and domestication of th dance as fostered in the Royal Courts came on the stage

A similar bifurcation took place in the sixteent century in Spain. After having been reconquered b Christian France and Great Britain, the Moors of Nor thern Spain still danced European dances as for instanc Basse Dance, Allemande, Pavane to mention a fev After the discovery of America, flamenco becam popular in the South of Spain in Andalusia. This dan has its origin in African dances as they were danc in Brazil, Cuba and Haiti, in the twelfth century, t epoch of the Almoravides which stretched from Tole to Senegal, bore out the fact that African dances m have been imported directly. Today, the flamenco danced only by the Gypsies. Religious in its origir contains some elements of fertility dances and those marriage ceremonies. At the same time it is the c dance in Europe which has kept its pure and authe

* Originally submitted at the International Seminar on the Problems of Cultural Policy in Africa, from September 12 until October 7, 1966, at the German Foundation for Developing Countries in Berlin-Tegel.

character without any trace of foreign influence, and this in spite of the persecution of the Gypsies in the whole world and in spite of the very serious efforts which have been made by the Catholic Church during centuries for its extermination. During the Christian festival in modern Spain one can see a ceremony or procession of pure Christian style, and at the same time, at some distance, Gypsies were dancing flamenco with all the temperament and in its pure style which has been retained since the 3,000 years of its existence.

In Europe, the dance, after reaching its zenith, progressed very far from its origin and became rigid and sterile, so that the choreographers had to look for new forms and horizons. These new horizons were very similar to the slogan of the eighteenth century, the famous *retour a la* nature of ROUSSEAU, namely: back to the origin, back to the source, or as a cultural critic exclaimed: 'A whole library for a crumb of original life!'

This development had two phases. The first phase was the influence on classical ballet in its strict sense and its rigid and sterile form by the so-called expressive dance which in Germany was represented by the famous dancer MARY WIGMAN, who lives in Berlin. Expressive dance liberated the dancer from the severe and restrictive rules which classical techniques had imposed on it. This liberation took place at the same time on the psychical plane, giving free reign to emotions, sentiments, the vital—sphere—*l'elan vital de* BERGSON—all that classical ballet had domesticated and kept under rigid control. But at the same time there was influence of African elements, as for instance jazz, and this means African in the sense of the great voyage of African culture during the slave trade in Africa, South-America, North-America and Europe. In this sphere the dance underwent many developments and influences ending in a renewal of the classical ballet itself. This epoch became the culmination point of the reformed ballet classique and the ballet expressive with the emergence of DIAGHILEW, FOKIN, NIJINSKI, KARSAVINA, PAVLOVA, SAKHAROFF, LIFAR, DUNCAN, LABAN, WIGMAN, PALUCCA, CHLADEK, KREUZBERG and others.

In his book *Ballet—Shape and Essence*, the German writer GERHARD ZACHARIAS analyses classical ballet in relation to a myth: the sun god fighting the god who knows the secret of lighting fire. The sun god wins the fight by twisting the arm of the fire god and this means in the figurative sense that the conqueror wins perpetuity and creation out of pain, sacrifice and destruction. This myth is put by Zacharias as parallel to the technique of the ballet classique, the twisting of arms and legs and other very painful movements and exercises which entails suffering of pain, sacrifice, destruction for perpetuity, beauty, harmony and creation.

This myth, although far-fetched, can be used, for our purpose regarding the two revolutionary phases of the dance. The first phase took place after the First World War. In this phase the individual had not yet been touched in his proper and most profound essence. The same applies to dance; the revolution of expressive dance against classical ballet did not touch its proper essence or its vital and religious sphere, and indeed this revolution did not appeal to the irrational. Thus the Second World War was brought about as a result of the complete breakdown of all ethical and moral values. This breakdown metamorphosized the mode of dancing in the second phase of the revolution. The outcome was a strong influence of folklore, of exotic and African dances—KATHERINE DUNHAM and different groups of African ballets. Under the influence of the one-sided technical and rational outlook, the modern style comes up—MAURICE BEJART and others. But its very origin is a psychic revolution, and again the liberation of the individual from the very long yoke of domestication and oppression in the psychic and vital sphere. It is the search of the injured individual for safety and protection in a psychic chaos which neither humanitarian values nor traditional religion had been able to master. I put some stress on this situation as a warning for our African guests against several tendencies to domesticate African modern dance so that it becomes very soon sterile.

Let us have a look at the consequences of this revolution and at the same time at its origin. In this civilized and abstract world deprived of colour and fantasy, young people do not know how to use their energy and imagination other than in all sorts of folly and outbursts. It is the world of ROCK'N' ROLL, of TWIST, of the BEATLES, ROLLING STONES, of broken furniture, of ecstasies and excesses, young people revolting against the passive role which domesticated art has imposed on them, so that they want nothing

but to play an active role, to participate, and moreover, they desire to feel, to experience, to live, to catch the crumb of life! Furthermore they wish to be enshrouded in ecstasy which is a religious phenomenon.

At this point, the dance, dancers and choreographers turn anew towards the origin and source, and this means towards Africa. It is not so much the conscious and voluntary individual but his soul which, corresponding to a logical or rather psychological law, turns towards the inner field, the dwelling-place of images, rites and symbols. This, means in the language of European depth psychology: tending towards the archetypes which have been forgotten and neglected by the civilized and domesticated individual but which nevertheless live and sleep in his soul, ready to revive at the propitious moment. And here we have again Europe, an old race, guilty in many regards indeed and abused with good cause, but with much merit and experience in many fields, a marvellous accomplishment in the sector of civilization. Europe is in search of the lost dance and again knocks at the door of Africa—the world-master and guardian of the dance—from its very origin. At this point, Europe and Africa meet in a most intimate way, both looking for new forms and modes, in a completely changed and transformed world. Europe, with an overabundance of techniques and forms, looks for new inspiration, new creative sources, while Africa, with an overabundance of substance and creative inspiration, looks for appropriate forms and techniques.

THE POSITION OF AFRICAN DANCES

Far from making any statement or giving a complete survey of African dances, suffice to give a brief enumeration of some concrete examples and the problems connected with them. For the sake of precision I can name only those examples I had the opportunity to watch personally in Nigeria or at least to hear or read about. One of the most interesting experiments and the most fertile for our subject is being made at the School of Drama at Ibadan University, Nigeria. This School of Drama serves the following purposes:

(1) to provide practice in theatre and the dance for students pursuing degree courses in the Faculty of Arts;
(2) to form a theatre group in view of a future national theatre;
(3) to cultivate traditional dances and music and to bring it on the stage;
(4) to record and describe the different tribal dances, to register music, to produce films, etc. (Photographer and director FRANK SPEED).

With a view to assembling such a group, the University in 1963 invited dancers and musicians throughout the whole country by newspaper advertisements to participate in the selection. On the first invitation more than 600 dancers arrived, some from great distances. Of these 600 only thirty-six could be incorporated in the group, the others had to go back, all of them very sad in their hearts, because they all would have liked to devote their time entirely to the dance and the theatre. To the questions asked by the director of the School of Drama, MR GEOFREY AXWORTHY, whether they were even willing to give up respectable jobs, all participants unanimously replied 'Yes'.

Under the direction of the choreographer, Mrs PEGGY HARPER, this group stages so-called dance-dramas, representations of traditional dances within the framework of a legend, tale or a story invented by a modern author. These pieces are worked out in a workshop which operates every year for a week or 10 days; periodically, new dances and musicians are called for selection. The first play presented by the School of Drama Workshop, *CREATION* had as its subject the creation myth of the Kono (Guinea) written by B. HOLAS. In the first performance, the legend was presented with words. The second, which took place in the following year, was narrated only by means of traditional Yoruba dances, combined with dances or elements of dance of the Ibos, accompanied by original drumming and compositions of the young musicologist, AKIN EUBA, who has amalgamated the different tribal musical styles in view of the harmony of the whole play.

The second play was *DANDA*, based on the novel of the young writer NKEM NWANKWO, a light and amusing piece which was shown at the First World Festival of Negro Arts in Dakar. In this piece the amalgamation of different tribal elements and forms was refined for the dance and music as well as for the costumes, designed by DEMAS NWOKO.

The third piece, OWUAMA, tells the story of the water spirits, taken from the religion of the people of Calabar, living near the Niger Delta.

I was able to attend only the first of these three plays, but all of them confront us with one of the most burning problems of African culture in modern times: the problem of authenticity.

THE PROBLEM OF AUTHENTICITY

In order to achieve a rapport between the different phases of traditional dances with the action of the play, the choreographer has to use movements which seem to be in some way strange, artificial, and non-authentic. They are either very similar to the style of European classical ballet or to the expressive dance, or to some other foreign elements. The costumes were equally considered to be non-authentic and artificial especially the materials used—cloth printed in piercing colours, attributes of papier-mache etc. used in the *CREATION* play, designed by EVE DE NEGRI, a lecturer of Art at the College of Technology in Yaba. Faced with the question: can African dance be displayed on the stage without a minimum of techniques or foreign elements, some exemplary show-pieces for perfect authenticity were named:

1. *THE PALM-WINE DRINKARD*, a play for singing and dancing based on a story by AMOS TUTUOLA, played by the Travelling Theatre of KOLA OGUNMOLA, an excellent comic actor.
2. *OBA KOSO*, the story of the Yoruba God Shango, played, sung and danced by the DURO LADIPO Theatre, which participated at the Festival of Berlin in 1964.

These two plays and others by the same producers, which unfortunately I could not see, were performed in Yoruba language, in the setting of Yoruba traditional, historical and religious life with its music, dances, motives, out of tales, myths and daily life. Duro Ladipo, who first composed his plays under the influence of church music, went back to the original Yoruba drumming-music and Yoruba history. Not at all one-sided in his outlook, he translated a play by the Swiss dramatist DURRENMATT, *The Double*, for the Nigerian Broadcasting Service, while Ogunmola with his group prefers popular subjects in Yoruba language.

Out of the discussions on authenticity, the following theories arose. Firstly, that everything is authentic which has not been influenced by Europe or the West. This theory is supported by some critics of the University of Ibadan, as for instance ULLI BEIER, the well-known European writer and cultural critic formerly living in Nigeria. Also, that the study of foreign dance techniques inhibits rather than develops the artist's potentialities, this theory is supported by Mrs Harper.

Secondly, that a spectacle is authentic when it recreates faithfully the most characteristic aspects of life which it wants to show on the stage. This indicates a sort of truthfulness towards the subject of representations which can include changes of techniques or forms and, for African dances, restriction of the duration of the performance, because a modern and urban audience cannot be kept seated for a whole night. This theory is supported by KEITA FODEBA, the former director of the company of African Ballets of Guinea.

Thirdly that African dances are no longer authentic as soon as they are put on the stage. So that in modern times, everything can be called authentic that a single artist or a group of artists create by legitimate inspiration and adherence to the rules of creativity, a theory supported in my lectures at Ibadan University. Regarding the fact that the notion of authenticity is connected with traditions of a certain sort, we can replace it by the notion of the legitimate. This means that art under the dictatorship of absolute authenticity can easily degenerate to pure imitation of the past or become a pure museal! conservation, loosing contact with a developing population or with the needs of modern times. Negating any foreign or modern influence, art as a whole may become divided between strictly authentic art without any connection to modern times on the one hand and art entirely influenced by Europe, a division which has taken place in painting, theatre and literature.

Here a very important suggestion of ULLI BEIER, in his *Art in Nigeria* can be mentioned: 'that art is always the expression of the ideas that inspired it, so that a perfect authentic art would imply an unbroken traditional society and its beliefs'. Another suggestion in this seminar was that of WOLE SOYINKA: discussing the role of museums in the development of modern Africa as a dynamic museum showing art not as a dead museum piece but in its natural surroundings, in form of performances, lectures, etc. As a logical consequence this would mean what I suggested to Prof. JEAN GABUS, the creator of the exhibition of African Art in

Dakar: that a perfect dynamic museum which enjoys a legitimate authenticity should integrate and transform some elements of traditional and religious forms into modern life. As this suggestion, until now, has shocked Europeans and Africans as well, I want to put it in parenthesis. Reaction of Prof. Gabus: 'This would be fascinating'!

These different theories of authenticity do not seem to be followed in their strict sense in practice. So, in formulating her theory, Mrs Harper seems to have had a rather doubtful experiment before her eyes: the experiment which is being made at Legon University in Accra by A. M. OPOKU who choreographs African traditional dance on the basis of the method of LABAN. This experiment shows very clearly how the African dance can move in the straightest way towards sterility when using western techniques or methods in the wrong way. This experiment gives full justification to the theory of the non-Western influence of Mrs Harper, but in her last play, *OWUAMA*, Mrs Harper seems to use her theory in a rather elastic way: if we go by a photograph shown in the *Nigeria* Magazine one of the postures of the *prima ballerina* of the group, Miss BETTY OKOTIE, is no longer 'typically African', neither in its expression nor in its technique, but rather inspired by the technique of European ballet. This does not mean that the whole dance necessarily has a non-authentic effect.

As an example of creative authenticity I have chosen *THE LION AND THE JEWEL* by WOLE SOYINKA, a theatre piece which has a traditional background but includes the currents of civilization and modern times. The way the dance is used in this play may be called authenticity through correspondence to reality, as Keita Fodeba puts it. The dramatic action is interrupted by traditional dances, all choreographed for the stage and composed to illustrate a part of the dramatic action. These dances seemed to be more authentic than those of the *CREATION* play, because they are presented as very brief separate pieces during the dramatic action without any connecting elements or borrowed accessories.

As a basis for discussion I would like to mention some modern experiments which show the influence between European and African dance or the movement towards a synthesis of European and African dance:

1. The teaching of the African dance techniques in the *corps de ballet* of the Opera of Paris shows elasticity and suppleness of the body, expression by all the parts of the body, of the muscles, by gesture instead of the rigid movements prescribed by classical technique.
2. The ninth symphony of BEETHOVEN danced by the troupe of MAURICE BEJART, introduced by African drumming which marks the awakening of humanity, before the dance starts to show the different phases of human emotions and feelings.

These two experiments are, in my opinion, not very convincing. The only performance that convinced me until now is:

3. The ALVIN AILEY ballet, an American ballet; Ailey, an Afro-American who has created a perfect synthesis of the ballet classique and African dance-style, a synthesis most similar to the negro spirituals which are, on the sector of music, a complete synthesis of elements of African and Christian religion. The most perfect and moving piece in the repertoire of this troupe, REVELATIONS, is a baptism accompanied by original negro spirituals. It is a negro spiritual danced with the highest artistic, aesthetic, expressive quality which inspires religious feeling and awe. In this way dance comes very near to its original state: dance as religious expression and function.

CONCLUSION

These examples are related to the particular environment and historical development of one ethnic group or a particular cultural sector and cannot be copied or imitated. The African dance has to find its form, essence and technique in developing out of its own traditions while European dance has to incorporate foreign elements in such a way that it does not loose its own character. It is not our duty here to find practical solutions, this can be done only by living experience and practical work, not by a round table discussion. One point seems to me of great importance in this regard and this makes the Nigerian experiments fascinatin apart from their artistic and symbolic quality. Th work is done, at least until now, in a sort of anti-sho attitude, with intensive and conscious training and close connection with the places of inspiration, tra

tional society, religious rites and festivals or within the place many pretentious bards of Negritude abhor: the bush. In addition to this serious practical work, the historical, theoretical, literary and philosophical side of the dance has to be fostered in a more conscious and enlightening way.

As far as dance is concerned, its history, techniques, developments and needs, its problems and its tremendous importance for the future, there is little clear information and no basic knowledge, research and literature as it exists for all the other arts. Instead of this we find much enthusiasm and dedication, but neither in Africa nor in Europe have these unconscious and indistinct feelings found the channel which leads the dance and its social, cultural and religious functions towards the renaissance corresponding to its psychic, cultural and religious importance.

These Nigerian experiments which I could sketch only in a very brief manner show some awakening in this sector, and with it the responsibility towards this most universal and fascinating art. Now to return to the myth, can it be said in the face of all sorts of destructions and difficulties going on in Europe as well as in Africa, that a renewal or a creative renaissance of equal splendour—could be expected?

Literature

Helmut Gunther und Helmut Schafer—Vom Schamenentanz zur Rumba Stuttgart 1959

Gerhard Zacharias—Ballett—Gestalt und Wesen Koln 1962

Keita Fodeba—La dance africaine et la scéne Prèscence Africaine Juin-Sept. 1957

Geoffrey J. Axworthy—Nigerian History and Culture African Notes University of Ibadan 1964

Ulli Beier—Art in Nigeria 1960 Cambridge University Press 1960

THE ARTS IN THE NEW AFRICA*

By Gerald Moore

SOONER or later I shall have to come to terms with that phrase which obtrudes in my title—'The New Africa'. I have retained it because it so conveniently begs some of the questions I want to consider here. Does any artist, for instance, really inhabit a society which is new in the sense that seems to be implied? Are not all societies old, those in Africa certainly not less so than societies elsewhere?

This obstinate antiquity may be a source of embarrassment to the public propagandist, who runs about mentally putting brassieres on every shining torso, but to the artist it provides a cone of fascination about which his imagination perpetually wheels and flutters. T. S. Eliot has given us the classic statement of the way in which the artist extends tradition by reacting against, yet within it. An equally important result of his reaction is that he helps to define that tradition, by restating its significance for him and for his generation.

For some time this particular function of the artist was obscured in Africa by the urgency of the dialogue with colonialism. The demands of this dialogue may be credited with having given the first great impetus to a re-examination of African tradition and African social values, but at the same time the pressure of the debate itself often dictated what was found and how it was presented. It is generally accepted that the whole movement of Negritude in French-speaking Africa, for example, can only be fully understood in relation to the colonial policies which helped to call it forth. But, despite the obvious differences in colonial policy, it is equally true that all discussion of cultural issues in English-speaking Africa was, until very recent years, conducted with at least one eye fastened on the colonial intruder. Only with his departure (if, indeed, he has departed) did it become possible for Africa to take up again the debate with herself from which a more autonomous art can grow. Today the attention of the artist in tropical Africa is directed more and more upon his own society.

Looking at the Present

A book like *Things Fall Apart* is the work of a man who has begun to see the past steadily and see it whole.

* This paper was presented to the African Studies Association of the United Kingdom at Edinburgh in September, 1966. It is culled from *Insight*, the quarterly review of current affairs.

But *A Man of the People*, written only seven years later, marks Achebe's attainment of the far more difficult feat of looking at the present in the same way. The first achievement was, I think, necessary to the second. An acceptance of history, a clear-eyed reunion with one's ancestors, made it possible to see, in African terms, what had gone wrong in the estate of their descendants. On the mundane level, this finds its reflection in the historical moment when a mere display of nationalist rhetoric without results no longer enables the speaker to pose as a liberating hero; when he is called to account, not by the waning colonial power, but by his indignant fellow countrymen. This is the moment predicted and, with uncanny accuracy, described in the last pages of *A Man of the People*.

'... In the affairs of the nation there was no owner, the laws of the village became powerless. ... In the fat-dripping, gummy, eat-and-let-eat regime just ended—a regime which inspired the common saying that a man could only be sure of what he had put away safely in his gut or, in language even more suited to the times: 'You chop, me self I chop, palaver finish'; a regime in which you saw a fellow cursed in the morning for stealing a blind man's stick and later in the evening saw him again mounting the altar of the new shrine in the presence of all the people to whisper into the ear of the chief celebrant—in such a regime, I say, you died a good death if your life had inspired someone to come forward and shoot your murderer in the chest—without asking to be paid'.

The vigour and certainty of this writing adds a new dimension to Achebe's talent. The artist, without descending from his proper level of activity, is speaking directly to his age. There are signs that the fading dialogue with colonialism will be succeeded by an African dialogue of increasing intensity and passion, one which will seek to expose the features of its society to the keen and angry air of reality. Another recent Nigerian novel, Wole Soyinka's *The Interpreters* (1965), though more metaphysical in its concern with the web of destiny around each character's life, is equally sharp and penetrating in its observation of the social scene. The mordant comedy of such scenes as the Professor's cocktail party makes a perfect backdrop, setting off by its very triviality the serious relationships and self-discoveries which Soyinka unfolds among his principal characters.

The Interpreters also takes stock of current evils, corruption, licensed violence and fatuous social pretension, in a way that brings a new edge to West African fiction. But whereas the purging of these evils is almost the point of Achebe's book, Soyinka's leads the novel in a fresh direction by his insistence on full realization of a whole group of characters, and by his careful tracing of the effect which each has on the others. *The Interpreters* taken together with a work such as Cheikh Kane's *L'Aventure Ambigue* from the French-speaking sphere, suggests that African fiction may be moving out of a relatively simplist phase into something altogether more complex and challenging, something which can bear comparison in its level of organization with the best work from the Caribbean.

Dramatic Idiom

In drama, too, a forward movement is visible in the work of the past year or two. The search for an African dramatic idiom began with a display of apparent influences from far afield: Genet in Lewis Nkosi's *Rhythm of Violence*, West End drawing-room comedy in Easmon's *Dear Parent and Ogre* and De Graft's *Sons and Daughters*, Greek and Elizabethan tragedy in Clark's *Song of a Goat*, Brecht in some of Soyinka's early work. Of course, when these influences were filtered through an African imagination and dressed in African situations, the effect was of something fresh and exciting, and was rightly praised as such. Nor is it suggested that these influences were the only ones present in a group of works which have truly made possible the growth of a new art of the theatre in Africa.

But when we turn to recent plays like Soyinka's *The Road* and Clark's *Ozibi* we can see forma influences flowing in directly from African sources anc shaping the dramatic structure right from the start *The Road* is boldly ritualistic, particularly in the las scene, and this ritual element is not fragmented but taken in entire (largely from the *Egungun* masquerade and transmuted by the author's purposes.

Parallel with this radicalism on the formal plane go Soyinka's radical use of local language, 'deep' pidgi even occasional snatches of Yoruba, alternating with t vigorous but orthodox speech of Professor to give t play as a whole a very wide range of vocal idiom. T device of varying the language level of success scenes is Shakespearean, if not older, but its use h

Arts Theatre, has also begun experiments in redesigning African musical instruments for use on the stage. For this purpose an instrument needs not only a strong enough tone (which many traditional instruments lack) but a clean and beautiful shape which will express itself distinctly to all corners of the theatre. Yet there are clear advantages, if dance and music are to be used in a fully-integrated way, in keeping the musicians visible upon the stage. Eastern drama has gained as much as Western drama has lost by maintaining this practice. Here African drama seems likely to follow the Eastern example.

Music itself is also the subject of some of the most interesting activity in recent African art. The traditional Ethiopian orchestra plays without a conductor, without properly developed harmonies, and with all the different instruments sounding continuously throughout the piece. At the Creative Arts Centre in Addis Ababa, led by Tesfai Gessessa, music has now been composed for this same orchestra in which, under the guidance of a conductor, groups of instruments enter at various times and erect much fuller and more complex harmonies. The effect is to produce music of infinitely greater range and variety from the same group of instruments, whilst retaining the characteristically Ethiopian sound of each.

African Instruments

Again, in West Africa thinking has now moved beyond the rather sterile debate between uncompromising Westernizers and equally uncompromising preservers. Experiment in composing new music for African instruments proceeds side by side with the universalizing study of musicology on the one hand and intensive research into traditional music on the other. Less theory and more practice is beginning to produce music which is technically new yet profoundly African in feeling, in precisely the same way as a good oil-painting or a novel like *Things Fall Apart*.

African music may now be poised to move beyond its familiar functions of enhancing a social situation such as dancing, expressing a ritual, or invoking the participation of a god or spirit, into that most difficult of all musical functions, arousing our consciousness of an experience outside the occasion of the music altogether.

It is impossible to deal adequately in an article of this kind with the many exciting individual developments

in poetry and in the visual arts. One of the most interesting and hopeful of these is the emergence of a new type of traditional artist, in response to the emergence of a new public. At one time, as recently as ten years ago, it looked as if the traditional artist was a vanishing species, doomed to disappear altogether as soon as the creeping tide of modernity reached the remote areas where he still lingered. The future seemed to lie entirely with the college-trained and academically-educated artist who was then emerging.

Now we have a situation in which a brass-caster like Yemi Bisiri, completely traditional in his training and background, can mount a one-man show and receive all the usual coverage by press, television and critical notice. Bisiri began as a maker of *Edan*, the small brass figurines used by members of the Yoruba Ogboni cult. A market for these still exists, but now he has been able to add to it a small but discriminating public who buy his works for the pleasure of looking at them. And yet this is not something which can possibly be dismissed as 'tourist' or 'airport' art, but is clearly the work of a serious and deeply religious man.

Nor is the example of Bisiri by any means unique. Nigeria also has Asiru, originally an Oshogbo coppersmith, who began many years ago to make copper and gold trinkets for the local women. Gradually they were weaned away from these by the mass-produced articles from the coast, which had all the glamour of novelty. Here again, it might be thought, was an artist vanishing beneath the march of progress. But Asiru was encouraged by the writer and critic Ulli Beier to experiment with small copper brooches, bracelets and hammered relief wall-plaques. Gradually these began to sell and soon Asiru was working on a larger and larger scale, using aluminium as well as copper, and developing what was virtually a new art of metal relief panels.

Now matters have reached the point where he has commissions to execute large reliefs for the walls of new skyscrapers in Lagos, for the doors of new churches and in many other places. He is able to compete for such commissions with the college-trained artists who seemed destined at one time to carry all before them. Idah, a famous carver of Benin City, has also been able to work his way into the attention of a new public.

New Generation

None of this is meant in disparagement of the new generation of artists, however, who are beginning to produce works of outstanding interest in many fields. The survival of the traditional artists to work side by side with them should be the truest encouragement and inspiration they could have. For the new artists, too, must come to terms with the tradition and so help to define it for themselves.

We see this process at work in the monumental sculpture of the Ghanaian artist Vincent Akwete Kofi. His *Hornplayer* and his *Drummer* (Okyereman) freeze into an eternal gesture. Kofi's vision of what these men have given to Akan culture. The drummer plays with his head tilted far back, drinking his message from the skies. To the gods he speaks with humility:

'Slowly and patiently I get to my feet. . . I am learning, let me succeed.'

But for man he is the voice of authority, the regulator of life and time who awakens him early in the morning. The hornplayer too is a bridge between man and god, but in Kofi's vision of him the brooding face is held low, while it is the mouth of the Rorn which rises heavenwards with its cry:

'Master of the path, I am exposed to fire.'

Far away in Zambia another monumental sculptor has emerged whose works continually beckon us towards the other world. But Petson Lombe, like Kofi, is at present the victim of a situation in which monumental works can expect only public commissions, and those in control of public commissions are looking only for the obvious, for the visual slogan. It is reported that Lombe recently lost the commission for the Zambia independence monument because he declined to produce a man with a hoe.

In painting, the modern artist adjusts to tradition in a hundred different ways, but he seldom ignores it. Ben Emokpae of Nigeria creates in one of his paintings a whole background of masks, flickering and glowing behind his boldly realized subject, which literally emerges from them. Demas Nwoko, in his portrait head entitled *Onile Gogoro*, drinks from the remotest sources of Nigerian art, drawing his formal inspiration from the Nok terra-cotta sculptures of the first millennium B.C.

The cement sculptures of Felix Idubor, so splendidly adapted to the demands of modern architecture, as may be seen in his fine screen for the Chase Manhattan Bank in Lagos, achieves his braced, intense monumentality in precisely the manner of the traditional caryatid or

stool-pedestal figure. Yet the change of material, scale and setting creates a new art.

The Poet's Problem

Discussion of recent work in poetry presents even more difficulties, since each writer is making his own lonely assault upon the language he has chosen. Since poetry involves, by definition, a handling of language at the highest level of awareness and subtlety, the problems of the African poet who chooses to write in a European language are especially acute. His work is one long struggle to 'naturalize' as it were, the words he uses; to plant them in his native soil and nourish them in his native climate.

Here I think the Anglophone poets have been markedly more successful than the Francophone. The language they use is not only infinitely more open to change and variety of usage, but has already developed dialect forms in various parts of Africa. Dialect forms such as West Coast pidgin and Freetown Krio (which some would claim to be a separate language) often enjoy the status of the major regional dialects in Britain today. Just as a Yorkshireman might 'talk B.B.C.' at his London office but blissfully relapse into the dialect when home on leave, so a highly-educated West African will often enjoy conducting a conversation in pidgin or Krio when the situation permits it.

The African writer in English thus operates in a language situation of considerable complexity and depth. The novelist and dramatist have already taken considerable advantage of this, but the poet less so. We have not yet anything we could set beside Derek Walcott's sonnet sequence *Tales of the Islands*, with its subtle blending of orthodox English with various degrees and depths of the West Indian vernacular. But Thomas Dekker of Freetown has written some delightful dramatic sketches in Krio, quite apart from his translations of Shakespeare. Gladys Casely-Hayford showed many years ago what could be done in Krio poetry, and Frank Aig-Imoukhuede has followed with a handful of amusing poems in Nigerian pidgin.

So far, however, the major writers have confined their experiments in dialect to fiction and drama. The chief accent in poetry has been on a process of refinement which reaches its extreme in the spare melody of Christopher Okigbo:

'I see many colours in the salt teeth of foam
—That is no where to face under the half light.
'The rainbow they say is full of harmonies
The sea's free is richest.
—Wild winds cry out against us
We shall make a grey turn to face them.
—No wrinkles on the salt face of glass:
The wind's broom sweeps only the surface.
—I hear many voices about me:
They wear the green habit of kolanuts.
—The kingfisher gathers his ropes in the distance:
The salt water gathers them inward;
—The dipping paddle blade, the inconstant dolphins,
The salt water gathers them inward.
—Will the water gather us?
—Silences fade in my stomach like galloping antelopes.
—Will the water gather us?
As deep and profound as scented shadows,
Silences are loud like mountain waterfalls.
—Will the water gather us....
Gather us....gather us....'

This conversation of the silent sisters exists at the point where poetry and music become one. A constant striving for refinement and for musical effect is the way Okigbo chooses to empty the language of all unwelcome content so that he may fill it anew. Many of his impulses spring from poetry in Latin, Spanish and French, as well as from music itself. Early influences from Eliot and Pound are now less apparent in his poetry, though the work from which I have quoted also contains a passage which the author claims to be a variation on a theme by Malcolm Cowley, but which will inevitably recall Eliot's 'The Hollow Men' to any English reader. It begins:

'We are the dumb-bells
We are the dumb-bells
Outside the gates
In hollow landscapes'

Another device of Okigbo's is to use mysterious names like Kepkanly, which supposedly have some personal meaning for the poet but none for the reader. These names help to distance the poetry and maintain its visionary quality. They are like the abracadabra of a poetic initiation ceremony.

At another extreme is a poem like 'Lover's Song' by the Ghanaian George Awoonor-Williams. Here such mystery as there is resides in the human story behind the

poem, which it hints at so enigmatically, very much in the manner of many traditional songs in the African vernaculars. The image of folding the unsold cloth when the market closes at evening is extraordinarily concrete and poignant, embedded in this girl's cry of loss or abandonment:

'Call her, call her for me, that girl
That girl with the neck like a desert tree
Call her that she and I will lie in one bed.
When you went away
Isn't it seven years?
Shall I fold mine and say I am cheap
Returned unsold from the market?
If they marry a woman don't they sleep with her?
Isn't it seven years now since you went away?'

Their Own Moment

In this article I have tried to indicate some of the directions in which particular artists are now moving. If I might venture one generalization about the arts in Africa now, it would be this: the artist today is no longer in a posture of exile, either physically or spiritually; he is no longer locked in a debate with colonialism, nor concerned with either persuading or informing an alien audience.

Today the arts stand on the threshold of autonomy, ready to win mastery of their own landscape, their own climate, their own moment of time in Africa. In the coming years we can expect an art increasingly addressed to Africa, often presenting difficulties to the outsider, as any autonomous art will. We can expect also that this art will have its martyrs, for the task of revealing a society to itself is never without danger.

We can expect that for all those prepared to work at knowing it, both inside and outside Africa, the art now coming to birth will offer truths about that great continent which we have scarcely glimpsed as yet.

TIME

That Time and Tide wait for no man
Is a truth applying to every man.
Whether time is valued by each man
Is an open question to any man.

That it means Money is a fact
The trader knows as a matter of fact.
Daily punctual to the fleeting minute
He acts on the principle every minute.

But to the generality of the Human lot
It means no more than any other Jot.
To gain or lose by this omission,
Precisely depends on their different mission!

A. K. M.

POETS' CORNER

MORNING

As your heart beats
The world hums and turns, baby,
The eager feet
Go beating out the highway to the market;
The insect-whirls
And hum
Fill the air;
And dust rises, swirls,
Falls and turns,
Ebbs and eddies,
Spins and curls;
And overhead, the birds
Fling and hurl,
Nest to tree
Tree to nest.
Oh my baby, if you knew it
With the tiny beatings of your heart
The little pulsings of your blood
The whole world stirs.

MARY FOSTER

HARVEST

Now is harvest time
And the piquant smell of ripeness
Reminds me of the heavy gathering in.

When all shall be assembled
And the sorting out begins,
Let me see—where shall I sit?

F. O. EKENNA

READING

Reading, says Bacon, maketh a full man,
Included, in this sense, is also a woman.
Hence it follows—as the night the day
The illiterate 'man' has lost a day:
Can breed and cook—in case of the woman
Toil, listen and follow—in case of the man.

The pleasures of Reading are open to all
Who at a school would care to call.
From A to Z is the alphabet to learn
For those who are destined to turn
All they touch into a mine of Gold
Which men and women like to behold.

A joyful thing is the habit to read
What men of yore had left to seed:
To understand and confute the better
What thoughtful men may care to utter.
For Civilization and Culture you must read
And quote and use—when there's the need!

A. K. Metteden

PEN OR SWORD?

A POETIC DEBATE

The Pen, they say, is mightier than the Sword,
Whether that is true, is beyond the sword.
To the glorious warrior—proud of his sword
That must be settled—at the point of the sword.

To the inquiring Philosopher, with Pen in hand
It has invariably been, to proudly contend
That the pen, undoubtedly, has the upper hand:
What an endless Duel, for posterity to end!

But I always say, it all depends
On the luckless prey the crusader fends.
The Pen is not mighty, to the illiterate blind
Nor is the Sword, to the peace-loving kind!

A. K. M.

RAIN COMING

This withered grass, so fragile in my hand,
Sways through the day, sighing its need for rain
While my cracked heart trembled at every sound
[illegible] night fell cool to send my hunter in . . .

From noon till dusk faint clouds have sifted by
Written in the dust. I wait beside the fire:
Earth cries and heart cries, battering the sky,
'Where is the rain, oh wind? My hunter, where?'

Now now the stars blow up across the land,
Though earth and heart parch still for taste of rain—
Still the grass crumbles, withered on the wind;
[illegible] rises, no other hunter seen.

But heart of wind, the lightning gathers near
And where the rain bites, look: your hunter's here!'

PETER THOMAS

RAINFALL

By my window I stand and stare,
And fall in love with nature's hum:
Down they come in tiny strokes,
Those silver drops that we call rain.

I love watching the falling rain,
But one fun is dearer still.
Before the rain does start to fall,
'Whew—Whew', its teller blows;
Pedestrians, all, take to their heels,
And confusion pleasant so results.
But there's one point not clear to me:
Why won't the scampering stop and warn:
'Look, rain—
I must be home before you fall!'

EMWINMA OGIERIAIKHI

WHAT I WANT

Hold your gifts,
I do not want them,
What I want
Is here with me.

The wheat of Argentina
Will do me less good
Than the corn of Kano.

Hold your 'beatles'
The cricket's song in moonlight cool
Is enough music for me.

Give me Nigeria,
With her teething aches
You've given me all,
A man of action
Falls and rises.

BABATUNDE MUSTAPHA

RIVER BUBBLES

The river drummed
And sighed;
Gossamer bubbles
Like tree froths
Gyrated like a cyclone.

Soon the bowl shattered like a pot of wine
Before the sunflower,
And spilt a spate of surf
Which gradually whitewashed
The surface of the river
Which circled massively
Before carting the snowflakes southerly.

M. O. O. NJOKU

THE RAIN

The rain falls from the sky.
It comes down in drops.
The rain water is clean and pure.
It sparkles and flashes.
It is the cleanest of all waters.

Oh children! Come and watch the sky.
The rain is coming.
Very soon the rain will start.
Come out with your body covers
Raincoats, umbrellas, mackintoshes.
Oh! Come in a hurry to watch the sky.

The sky is already dark and blue
The wind is already high!
The rain is coming!
Boys, take off your caps!
Girls, cover your heads!

It is going to be a heavy rain.
The gale has started
And the trees are falling.
Rain, rain, heavy rain.
Run Run and hide yourselves!

ANNA IKWUE

EXPATRIATE LAMENT

How shall I leave this place, and make my way
To boat or plane, heart-held, foot-dragging slow,
Exchange the scent-breezed night and molten day
For grey, rain sodden Northlands; greasy snow
Slushed underfoot by folk who do not care
Close-faced, indifferent as their lonely skies.
True, I shall find efficiency out there;
What substitute for laughter-filled brown eyes,
Huge glinting smiles, loud markets, drums at night,
Yoruba charm. How shall I ever live,
Longing for warmth and palm-filled evening light?
Surface-polite and bland, will they forgive
The failure to adjust, heart-absence, tears—
'Well, poor soul, in Nigeria all those years'.

D.S.

ENDURANCE

Nothing worthwhile is achieved without some struggle;
All that endure are conditioned by the furnace of being.
And the totality of things is conflict.
Out of conflict is born the good,
And none should pray for strife to cease.
Life is very well lived,
When it's a success in spite of odds.

EMWINMA OGIERIAIKHI

ANYANWU

Gaping
mouth wide open
a ram
watching his love
dragged to the butchery.
I am gone
with the new moon madness.

I will call you
thread of gossamer
you are here. . .there. . .there. . .
silhouette princess
of knot-drooping hair.
Gone between the sneezing
and the words of incantation.

C. A. OKAFOR

NIGHTOUT

At last the moon staggered out,
pale and worn out
Like a weary bride of the first night.

Turning I whispered, 'see that, darling'.
But her face remained hid
in the cup of her kneels and breasts.

Then, not watching, watched,
She stole an upward glance
pale face to face,
And sobbed, 'Do send me home
And let's not meet again, please never'.

F. O. EKENNA

READERS' LETTERS

... be mentioned in your next issue.

Yours faithfully,

[illegible]

[illegible]

... was not actually M. Galadima[illegible] ... Kaduna Ronwa was certainly a ... the paragraph in which his name appeared ... the original manuscript contained also the names ... prominent Northern personalities which ... hence the paragraph ...

[illegible] ORAL LITERATURE

[illegible]

CONTRIBUTORS

... of African and European Drama. ... at the ... Ibadan University ... Switzerland ... with a view to ... African art on a broader ... and Mr Gerald Moore ... of *The Arts in the New Africa*, is on the staff of the University of Sussex, England.

THE NIGERIAN TELEVISION SERVICE

CHANNEL 10 LAGOS

Africa's First Station for Culture and Tradition

Presenting Leading Nigerian Talent in the Arts and Drama such as

★ DURO LADIPO ★ KOLA OGUNMOLA ★ I. K. DAIRO
★ BOBBY BENSON ★ VICTOR OLAIYA ★ AKIN EUBA
★ BEN ENWONWU ★ CHRISTOPHER OYESIKU
★ ULLI BEIER ★ WOLE SOYINKA ★ J. P. CLARK

Head Office:

112, BROAD STREET
P.M.B. 2276,
Phone: 26681,
LAGOS

Branches:

IBADAN, AKURE,
BENIN, ENUGU,
PORT HARCOURT,
KADUNA, KANO, JOS.

AFRICAN ALLIANCE INSURANCE CO., LTD.

For Future Security through Life Assurance

New Titles in the FORUM Series

A HUMANIST IN AFRICA

Kenneth Kaunda

Letters to Colin Morris in which the author, President of Zambia, expresses his beliefs and opinions about some of the fundamental questions troubling thinking people in his own and other African countries today.

7s 6d
Cased 16s 0d

TOPICS IN WEST AFRICAN HISTORY

A. A. Boahen

Covers salient historical features from the tenth to the nineteenth centuries, including a section on colonial rule and its overthrow in recent years. An eminent African historian writes: 'I am sure that this is a book that will not only appeal to the educated public... but which will also be of great use to students'.

7s 6d

MORE THAN ONCE

C. Agunwa

The tragi-comic story of Nweke Nwakor, a struggling businessman, and his vain attempts to achieve opulence.

Limp 8s 6d
Cased 21s 0d

INTRODUCTION TO AFRICAN LITERATURE

Ulli Beier

This book is an anthology of articles written for the magazine "Black Orpheus". The essays are critical assessments of the work of some outstanding African and Afro-American writers. The book is divided into four parts: The Oral Traditions, Poetry, The Novel, and Drama, and these are followed by a Select Bibliography of Critical Writing and Notes on the Contributors.

256 pages 8s 6d

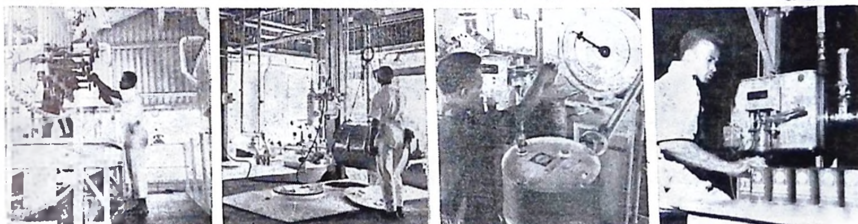
Longmans of Nigeria Ltd.,
P.M.B. 1036,
Ikeja

Longmans, Green & Co. Ltd.,
48 Grosvenor Street,
London, W.1.

Longmans

KEEPING PACE WITH DEVELOPMENT

SHELL



To keep in step with a rapidly expanding Nigeria — Shell have built this Lubricating Oil Blending Plant at Apapa — the first in West Africa. At a cost of £210,000 it blends six basic oil grades, with various additives, into 32 different grades of lubricating oils.

YOU CAN BE SURE OF

ELECTRICITY CORPORATION OF NIGERIA

AFRICA'S FASTEST GROWING ELECTRICITY INDUSTRY

For all your information, Contact:

E.C.N. HEADQUARTERS,
24–25, MARINA,
P.M.B. 12030,
LAGOS.
TEL. 23431–9 LINES.

OR IN THE REGIONS:

THE AREA MANAGER,
AREA OFFICE,
KAHALE BUILDING,
AHMADU BELLO WAY,
P.M.B. 2108,
KADUNA.
PHONE 2172

THE AREA MANAGER,
AREA OFFICE,
E.C.N.,
16, OGUI COMM. ROAD,
P.M.B. 1019,
ENUGU.
PHONE 3661

THE AREA MANAGER,
AREA OFFICE,
E.C.N.,
P.M.B. 5110,
IBADAN.
PHONE 21098

31a

nigeria magazine

NATIONAL LIBRARY OF NIGERIA
RECORDED
19 JUN 1967
SERIALS & DOCUMENTS SECTION.

No. 93 june 1967 two shilli

140 well-appointed rooms. 20 suites.
Restaurant. Private dining suites.
2 bars. Ballroom.
Full catering service.
Conference room. Spacious lounges.
Car park. Garden.
Central air-conditioning throughout.

Private bus meets all planes
at Ikeja Airport.

MAINLAND
HOTEL

2/4 Denton Street · P.O.B. 2158, Lagos, Nigeria
Phone 46101 · Cables: Mainland Lagos

: Designed by Tayo Aiyegbusi

Nigeria Magazine

June 1967 · 93

'Nigeria' Magazine is sold at 2s a copy. Annual subscription in Nigeria is 8s post free. Overseas subscription rate is U.S. $2, elsewhere 12s including postage by surface mail. Payments made by cheques outside Lagos should bear the endorsement 'Commission to Drawer's Account' with the full signature of the Drawer thereto.

All enquiries about advertisement should be directed to the Business Editor, 'Nigeria' Magazine, Exhibition Centre, Marina, Lagos, Nigeria.

The Editor is always glad to consider original, signed articles. While every care will be taken, the Editor cannot be held responsible for the loss or damage of material submitted to him.

'Nigeria' Magazine is published by the Cultural Division of the Ministry of Information, P.M.B. 12524, Lagos.

© NIGERIA MAGAZINE 1967

Editor: T. O. A. ADEBANJO
Business Editor: L. ALLAGOA
Asst. Editor: A. K. METTEDEN
Offices: Exhibition Centre, Marina, Lagos.
Telephone: 23134
Telegrams: Ednigmag, Lagos.

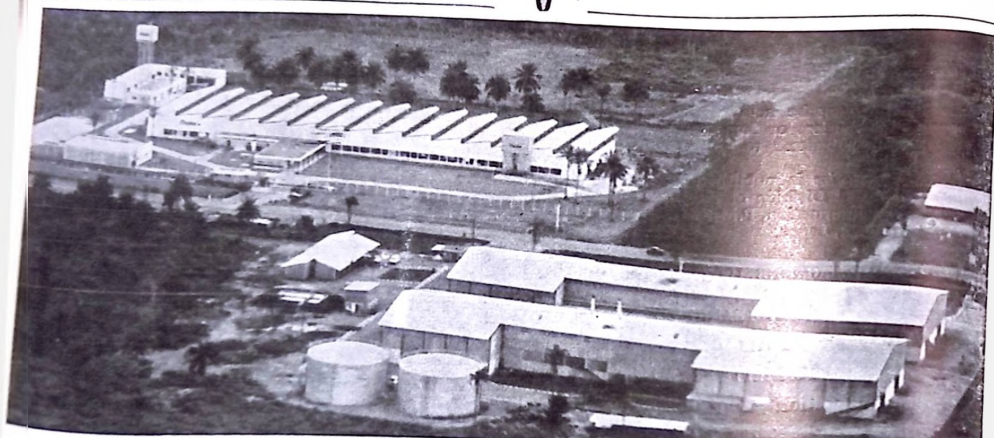
COVER

Illustrative legendary bronze door at the palace of the Owa of Ijeshaland, Western State of Nigeria.

Contents

Future Architectural Design, 107
Exhibition Centre's New Home, 114
Gallery Labac, 128
Archaeology in Eastern Nigeria, 134
Delta Masquerades, 145
LITERARY SUPPLEMENT
Native House Rule of Southern Nigeria, 159
The Beginnings of the W. A. Novel, 168
The 1896 Proposed Training College, 170
Forty Years Back, 175
Books, 184
Poems, 188
Readers' Letters, 191
Contributors, 191

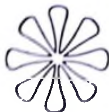
Helping to build the new Nigeria



NIGERITE ROOFING IN IKEJA FOR *(background)* The BATA SHOE FACTORY *(foreground)* VEGETABLE OIL NIGERIA LTD

An ideal building material especially suited to local requirements, Nigerite Asbestos Cement is playing an important role in the country's rapid development. It is being used in all the major construction projects in Nigeria at the present time and is chosen by international companies for its outstanding versatility, quality and value. If you are a home-builder, architect or contractor, choose Nigerite Asbestos Cement and be sure of getting the best.

CORRUGATED SHEETS
FLAT SHEETS
SOIL & RAINWATER PIPES

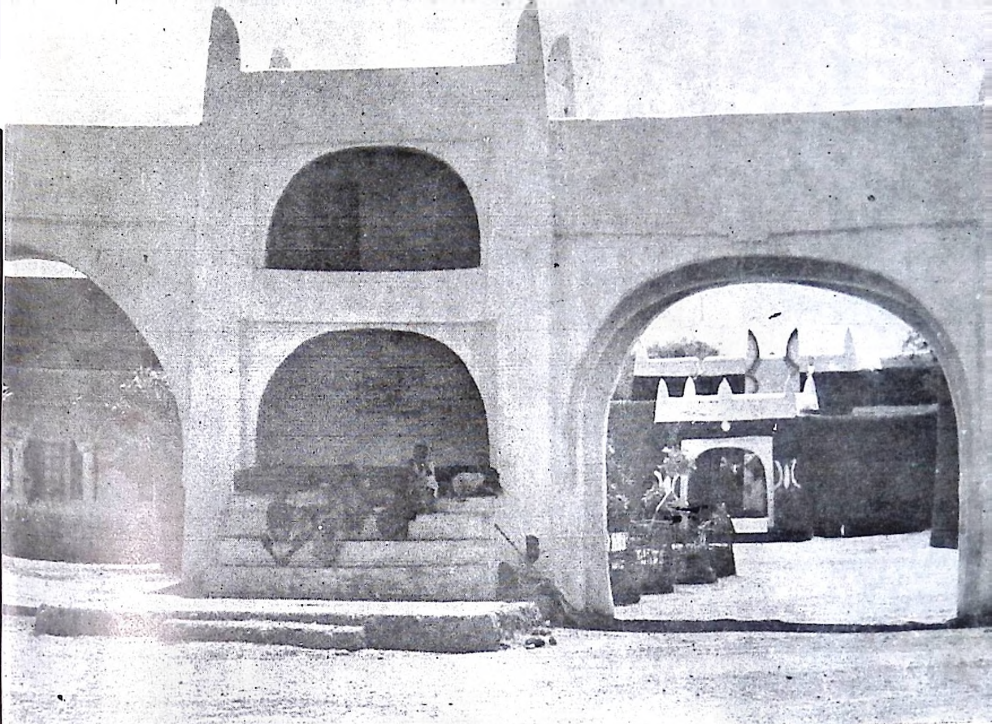


Also available
Pressure Pipes, Sewerage Pipes, Sanitation Pipes, Water Tanks, Roofing and Piping Accessories, Garden Requisites.

Nigerite is made in Nigeria by

ASBESTOS CEMENT PRODUCTS NIGERIA LTD.

A member of the Eternit Organisation



Traditional

FUTURE ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN

By

ALAN VAUGHAN-RICHARDS

IN the December 1966 edition of the *Nigeria* Magazine, John Godwin traced the development of architecture in Nigeria during the past century from the indigenous building to the colonial and finally to the modern styles. It might be interesting to speculate on what the next development might be.

Although West African art, in particular sculpture, and music have had a profound effect upon their art forms throughout the world, its architecture has made no impression whatsoever. Ulli Beier, one of the most sensitive observers, wrote in 'Art in Nigeria 1960,' 'Nigeria's greatest contribution to world culture so far has been its traditional art. As knowledge of West African cultures increases, it may be that European civilization will be influenced in the future by African poetry, religion and thinking. So far, it is only the art of West Africa that has made a real impact on Western culture. The influence of this art, however, has been so strong that it caused something like a cultural revolution.

'Around 1907 a small group of artists in Paris "discovered" African art. Masks, carvings and bronzes from West Africa had of course been known in Europe for centuries, but nobody understood their importance. It was only when Vlaminck, Derain, Picasso and Modigliani tried to free themselves from the stale and sterile conventions of European art that they could suddenly read the important message of African art. Here was an art form at last that was not content to copy nature, but in which forms were being invented freely. Not representation, but creation, was the function of this art. Here was an art that was unselfconscious, and uninhibited by irrelevant theories about techniques and perspective and anatomy.

Above: Moulded form in a play sculpture in Ikoyi. This is a third full size model of a house in moulded form

Below: Modern moulded building (Idlewild Airport by Saarinen courtesy: T.W.A.)

Above: Traditional Nigerian Building

Below: Modern moulded building (Sydney Opara House by Joern Utzon Courtesy: Architectural Press)

'And what an incredible wealth and variety of forms the subsequent study of African art revealed! There is no style in the world that does not find expression somewhere in West Africa. African wood-carving has provided the most important stimulus to European art since the Renaissance.'

On the subject of Architecture, he continues: 'It is probably an inevitable result of historical, economic and social factors that nearly all public buildings of importance in Nigeria are being built by European architects, and in a style and technique foreign to the country. Traditional architecture, while aesthetically very pleasing, cannot solve the technical problems involved in erecting ten-storey bank buildings or a university to house a thousand students,' and 'look at the soft undulating lines of a Nigerian town. The houses seem to cuddle up to the gentle curves of the ground. Among this relaxed, playful, loose architecture stand the modern buildings – hard, angular, glaring white, anachronistic. Is it any wonder that these buildings look so hopelessly foreign and imposed? They seem to defy the most basic principles of African life: rythme. Perhaps the rigidity of modern architecture is largely the result of the materials in which it is built.'

He also complained that Nigerian architects were only interested in Modern Architecture and concluded by quoting from Leopold Sedar Senghor:

'... Let black blood flow into your blood,
That it may rub the rust from your steel joints, like an oil of life.
That it may give to your bridges the bend of buttocks and the suppleness of creepers.'

In 1960, there was not only the normal reaction against the modes of the previous generation which was very pronounced in Nigeria, and the young architects were trained in the Modern Style, but the materials and design tools simply did not exist to develop the moulded forms of the indigenous buildings.

Modern architecture arose to meet the challenge of the First Machine Age and especially to use the industrial products that were developed between the two world wars. The leaders of the

Moulded form in a recent house in S.W. Ikoyi

Above: Traditional Nigerian Building

Below: Moulded form in a recent house in Ikoyi

movement tried to apply scientific principles to design functional building and to use the new materials in what they considered an honest way without trying to disguise them as traditional ones. These materials were generally produced in sheets such as plywood and glass, or in long straight lengths such as steel girders. The buildings were designed with the T square and set square and the calculations made with the slide rule. This led to buildings of simple geometrical forms.

It is very easy to design badly in the idiom of the Modern Style but extremely difficult to design well. Naturally, with the popularization of the style, many designers copied the gimmicks without understanding their function. Sun breakers for instance are frequently so designed that they actually make the building hotter.

Since the Second World War, we have entered upon a Second Machine Age with the development of new plastic materials and, more important, the new methods of design made possible by the use of the computer. It appears that the computer will become the contemporary counterpart of the steam-engine, but bringing about a revolution in information instead of power. The computer is usually thought of as a superior adding machine. While this may be true of the smaller ones, the latest large ones can actually generate or receive drawings on a screen similar to that of a television set. It should be possible within a few years for computers to automatically generate three dimensional similations of actually walking around in buildings when the necessary design information is fed into them. Far from enforcing uniformity as the mass production methods of the First Machine Age dictated, the Second Machine Age will permit individuality in products and will enable designers to be far more creative.

Modern moulded building. (Rouchamp chapel by le Corbusier courtesy: from New Churches in Europe by Kidder Smith).

Although the Modern Style has become almost universally accepted there are already indications that the Second Machine Age is beginning to affect art and architecture in a similar manner to that of the First Machine Age when at first there was a period of frantic seeking for methods of utilizing and expressing the new age or of reacting against it by trying to revive dead styles. It was during this crisis at the turn of this century that West African art and music were 'discovered' by the world. Modern Architecture, however, 'discovered' the sophisticated simplicity of the buildings of Japan which at that time was an underdeveloped country. Now Japan has become one of the more developed countries and has taken back inspiration from the Modern Style to produce some of the finest architecture in the world with its own idiom while still keeping within the main stream of good international design.

The architecture of the Second Machine Age is likely to be of moulded forms which are of great strength but which in spite of experiments by a few pioneers could not be utilized with the design tools available during the First Machine Age. There is much interest in the work of the Spanish architect Antoni Gaudi, one of the most important of these pioneers after nearly half a century of neglect. The more adventurous architects in Europe and America are experimenting with angular and moulded forms which would have been unthinkable a decade ago.

West Africa is the place where moulded forms have been used since time immemorial and if its buildings could become better known it could very well become the catalyst in forming the architecture of the Second Machine Age rather as Japanese architecture did in the First Machine Age. This entails studies of the manipulation of space and the philosophies which led to their creation. It does not mean trying to build ten-storey traditional mud buildings any more than the Modern Movement would have thought of building a skyscraper in traditional Japanese mats.

Obviously one must be very careful in trying to draw parallels between traditional West African buildings and modern needs. But is perhaps the wheel turning full circle when after centuries of monumental building for posterity, America and Europe should be talking of 'plug-in' cities and disposable houses, a conception long familiar to West Africa with its buildings of limited durability which were added to at will? In his book 'Yoruba Palaces' Dr G. J. A. Ojo says:

> 'On the whole the architects and designers of Yoruba palaces craved for beauty. Whenever there was a need for any major rebuilding, impressive efforts were made to improve on the quality of the previous architecture. The destruction of the Afin by whatever means caused the Oba very little concern or anxiety, as the responsibility for building and maintaining it was upon the entire working population of the kingdom. Moreover, through such destructions fresh opportunities to try new architectural styles were given to the builders. Hence, the Yoruba's nonchalant attitude to the razing by fire of a palace is borne out in the saying: *Ile oba to jona, esu ewa lose:* 'The goddess of beauty causes the palace to burn in order to ensure a higher architectural splendour.'

West African countries cannot yet afford most of the sophisticated tools of the Second Machine Age (computers cost from about twenty thousand to two million pounds each), but they can ensure that their indigenous buildings are as well known as their sculpture so that the architecture of the Second Machine Age may be given a bias in its direction. Apart from Dr Ojo's little book and a few articles in magazines like *Nigeria* there appears to be an almost complete lack of books on West African Traditional Buildings in English. Is it not possible for some 'coffee table' books to be produced to be put next to the excellent ones on West African Art? Better examples of traditional buildings should be actively preserved and proper records of those that are demolished kept: possibly this latter could be done by making it obligatory to submit a survey and photos of existing buildings before new plans are passed by the local authorities. Secondly the architects and other members of the design team can prepare themselves to take advantage of the next generation of computers and other tools which will be more reasonably priced and will have the 'bugs' knocked out of them b

the more developed countries. Although the price of the computers and other machines is prohibitive, there is a world-wide shortage of programmers which West Africa could take advantage of. It may well be that being less sophisticated in the ways of the First Machine Age is an advantage as they may approach the subject with fewer preconceptions. Thirdly experiments can be carried out with buildings of moulded form with the materials and scientific information at present available.

This then is the challenge to the designers in Nigeria—the winning of World Leadership. But they will have to hurry as the gap between the developed and underdeveloped countries is widening rapidly and 'many words do not fill an empty basket' if the millions of homes and other buildings that are required are to be provided.

References:

(1) 'Art in Nigeria 1960' by Ulli Beier Cambridge at the University Press in collaboration with the Information Division, Ministry of Home Affairs, Ibadan.

(2) 'Yoruba Palaces' by G. J. Afolabi Ojo, University of London Press Ltd.

EXHIBITION CENTRE'S NEW HOME

By

LAWRENCE ALLAGOA

HUNDREDS of visitors and art-lovers who stroll down the Marina, Lagos, in search of the Exhibition Centre have learnt of a new venue for exhibitions. This home is the Ground Floor Independence Building above which is the famous twenty-five-storey historic building, facing the Tafawa Balewa Square (Racecourse), Lagos.

This new forum, by no means a permanent and the best art centre for Lagos, a city that wears a coat bursting at the seams, is by far better and more spacious than the former Exhibition Centre, Marina, Lagos.

Since December 1966, the new Exhibition Centre has attracted hundreds of foreigners and the Lagos public anxious for a prestige home where the famous works of contemporary arts produced especially by Nigerian artists could be seen, appreciated, bought or collected.

Although efforts will continue to provide an all-time and multi-purpose Art Museum and an Art Gallery for Lagos, the new home for the Exhibition Centre has almost become a sound project welcomed and encouraged from widely different quarters. The new Exhibition Centre will be put into full shape in the next few months.

When fully equipped, the main feature will be a splendid exhibition hall and a side gallery which will be top-lit, flexible and built with movable screens, dovetailed on rollers, which could be easily detached or pushed to a corner to suit the display required by every artist while exhibiting his works. It will be entered from three sides; the side overlooking the Racecourse, from the side opposite the precincts of the British High Commission and from the back facing the Island Maternity Nurses' home.

The present foyer at the main entrance of the office building will lead into the hall where a prefabricated door will be built on movable rollers. There will be an annexe—a little office, where a

The Old Exhibition Centre, Marina, Lagos

clerk of exhibitions will sit within the reach of a telephone.

Adjoining this annexe will be a display desk where copies of back issues of the *Nigeria* Magazine will be sold. On the left of the entrance hall, that is to the left of the main entrance, facing the Racecourse, will stand a miniature gallery, where works of Nigerian artists, other than those belonging to the artist exhibiting his works, will be permanently displayed. An improvised bar, which could be removed or assembled at short notice, will provide entertainment for visitors and art-lovers who attend the opening of each exhibition.

The new Exhibition Centre—an open hall—covering an area of about 900 sq. ft. is in itself an asset, not easily found in central Lagos, especially with its situation at the precincts of what may be called Nigeria's Secretariat, where foreigners troop in large numbers—an advertisement forum in itself.

But what is even more enviable is the background it offers with its resplendent pieces o[f] artistic masonry and glass panes on which the oi[ls] of Nigerian painters will be splashed to giv[e] colour to what will stand for a long time as th[e] shop-window for exhibiting the handiwork o[f] Nigerian artists.

That the new Exhibition Centre will provid[e] an unexpected contrast in atmosphere, in the lon[g] run, is without question. Judging from its nearnes[s] to the National Hall, where foreign delegation[s] hold their conferences, many of them art-lovers, th[e] USIS, the Western House (which gives shelter t[o] a myriad of companies well known for the[ir] foreign visitors), the choice is noteworthy.

In the first place, the building with its imposin[g] facade and twenty-five-storey, which towe[rs] above the surroundings, will contain an ef[fi]ciently, although a prefab., planned, mode[rn] interior—a happy marriage between exteri[or]

The historic twenty-five-Storey Building with a modern interior—a happy marriage between exterior architecture and an interior revolution—houses the new Exhibition Centre (on the left graced by the Nigerian Flag flying at full mast)

The OLOKUN *by Ayo Ajayi—the picture depicts heads of Nigerian powerful chiefs in beads. Olokun is the god of the sea in Nigeria. InYoruba, it is believed that these gods give children to its worshippers who dress in white cloth and white beads. The gods themselves are supposed to live as mythological deities with palaces built of colourful coral beads and elegant ostrich feathers*

architecture and an interior revolution.

Secondly, the position of the site, poised almost imperceptibly between the Supreme Court, the Lagos High Court, the State House and the Racecourse, with race-goers and football fans mingling with the establishment, is a focal point in the curious life of the leisured city of Lagos.

It is also situated at a site with open spaces and parks for car owners. This is an achievement not provided for at the precincts of the old Exhibition Centre, Marina, Lagos.

The old Exhibition Centre, situated in a quiet, cool, but popular corner of the Marina, Lagos, adorned by a garden green, lined with well trimmed hedges and pebbled footpaths, presents an imposing scenery when viewed by passengers crossing to Lagos from Apapa on board the 'Kathleen', or visitors engaged in topographical flights by air over Lagos.

Hidden by the gigantic Lagos Anglican Cathedral and the edifices that house the main office blocks of the Nigerian Ports Authority and the Electricity Corporation of Nigeria, it has concentrated its life in a tiny all-purpose 'gallery' and has struggled and waltzed on a shoe string. With its offices—housing the entire editorial, photographic, clerical and accounting staff, who also deal with a cultural publication, called the *Nigeria* Magazine—the old Exhibition Centre has provided a long overdue place for holding exhibition from 7th December, 1946, until the change of venue to the new Exhibition Centre since December, 1966.

A REVIEW OF EXHIBITIONS

During the pre-independence era, a few leading Nigerian artists, dwarfed by the old but rare collections of their predecessors, chaffing for the traditional confines of an 'art' medium and spurred by the spirit of competition abroad and among themselves, initiated a cultural revolution in Nigeria in the field of contemporary art.

The impetus for sponsorship of these exhibitions was provided to Germy George during the first exhibition held at the new Exhibition Centre which was opened by the Military Administrator of Lagos, Major Mobolaji Johnson. At that show which was held between January 9 to 14, 1967 works of art ranging from paintings to sculpture

attracted art-lovers and connoisseurs thirsting for a large hall capable of containing viewers in an air-conditioned and relaxed climate.

Over £100 worth of works of arts were sold in a week. Notably among major works for which Germy was renowned was the 'Man in Chains'—a piece of sculpture half naked half moody which, although not a masterpiece in itself, portrayed the tremendous imagination of this young Nigerian artist and showed what the tender hands could mould, given financial support presently lacking.

This life-size of cross-legged sculpture, showed signs of torture, above all of wrecked hopes. It bore stamp of what art critics would, for want of a better language, call 'impersonal surface'. In a country such as ours, where artists have blazed the trail in Dakar during the First Negro Art Festival held in April 1966, this piece of sculpture could be more accurately described as a pride in technical skill.

Most of Germy's characteristics could be traced in the sculptures of Felix Idubor and Emokpae's three dimensional abstract paintings.

Between February 3 and 10, 1967, Onayemi Onabolu, a bald-headed, dapper art school-teacher, 30, son of the famous Chief Aina Onabolu, showed that 'painting is man in the face of his downfall.' Apart from his portrait, sketched with pencil himself, the works he exhibited were those of Lagos school-children between the ages of nine and fourteen. Theirs was realistic painting, an art of patient investigation and of probing attention, explicitly but not obviously understood by the lazy lot who gossip away in the public squares. 'Like father like son' splashed the art columnist of the *Daily Times*, Mr Ayo Ajayi.

In the field of contemporary art where realism is orthodox and abstract painting evokes excitement independent of object, the average work of these school-children was in the budding stage. 'Yemi

'Alms for the poor' drawn by sixteen-year-old schoolboy David Dale from Birch Freeman High School, Surulere, Yaba, Lagos

'Conflict' by Eve de Negri

was not keen to display his art mastery. But his students make up for it although he was not supposed to show us, in that exhibition, his best works. Why not? The intent of the exhibition was to demonstrate that 'Yemi Onabolu can inspire good students to make good art and the works shown were certainly testimonials to this fact.

This exhibition appeared to be Nigeria's return march for the exhibition of the works of little American school-children 'an exchange programme' which took place in December 1966, at the Exhibition Centre, Marina, Lagos, under the joint auspices of the *Nigeria* Magazine and the Society of Nigerian Artists.

Closely, following this exhibition, was the exhibition by Babajide Salisu, 19, a student of Yaba College of Technology. It was a curious show, a half-way house between realism, his minor attainment, and abstraction, his major achievement. It was a show not easy to describe. The exhibition brochure stated that ''Jide Salisu is not a commercial artist but won a prize for designing the threepenny stamp of Nigeria—a UNESCO AWARD.'

'Jide knew what he wanted his paintings to achieve and how to make them do it. That he jumped the early stage of realism into abstraction is a pity. But, that his work showed strands of eccentricity, originality and charm was unchallengeable. Possibly, few of his paintings would be best viewed in a group of school competitions.

Originality not only rules out copying other peoples' works, which no one would accuse 'Jide Salisu of doing, but it also precludes imitating him. Like many brilliant but overhasty artists, to whom fame comes so easily, he was unaware of the fact that a walking yard, even a snail's, may sometimes take one step further, much further than the breathless running of a horse. Nevertheless 'Jide is a painter of charm, a painter with future.

EVE DE NEGRI

The Society of Nigerian Artists with the co-operation of the Federal Society of Arts and Humanities and the Editor, *Nigeria* Magazine sponsored yet another exhibition between February 20 and 28, 1967, at the new Exhibition Centre

That was the exhibition of Eve de Negri whose fame in art, commenced abroad where she held a one-man exhibition at the Commonwealth Institute, London, in June 1965.

Eve's display showed art with a framework devoid of rigidity, but a framework nonetheless, in which a gentle anarchy prevailed. In it a fragile harmony between discipline and play, between the spirit of abstraction, call it creation if you like, and the natural inclination towards recreation, reigned.

The exhibition, well received, brought in the handsome sum of over £700 from sales. This achievement was possible by her exertions; she summoned all her friends and well-wishers who crowded the hall—a wonderful response.

Eve de Negri has come to occupy a unique place in modern Continental (she hails from Italy) and Nigerian contemporary art as a painter, who plunders the past and deeply escavates the mines of abstraction. She has exploited new technique and materials to create works of art which look modern and yet, because of their meaning, message and mission, timeless.

Using materials that come to hand—canvas, tube and the brush—Eve turned them i works of art by a simple stroke of the imaginatio She can take the brush and not only trace lin splash oil on the canvas but transform them into integral part of the picture. Eve de Negri's wor though abstract in its entirety, evoked a natur response from art-lovers hence her peculia genius is talked about by the Lagos public.

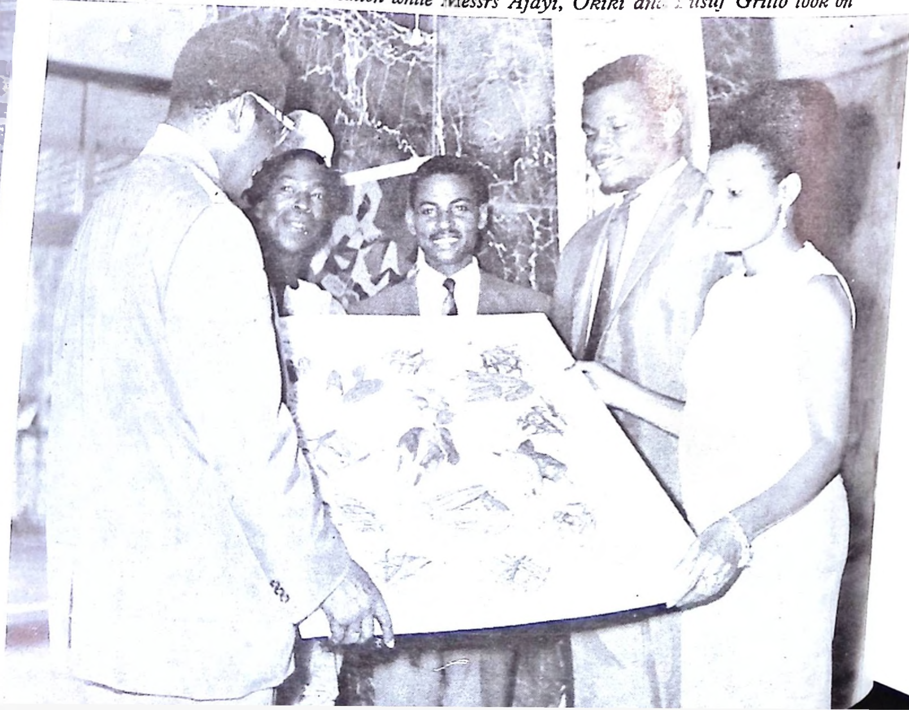
ETSO NGU

Not all artists whose works were exhibited at the new Exhibition Centre were new comers. Some famous art lecturers also came on stage. One of them was Clara Ugboadaga, now Mrs Etso Ngu, who has held five one-man exhibitions abroad.

Her unique achievement was shown in her sculptures moulded with Nigerian clay. She majored in realism, crowning it all with abstract paintings. Her sixth exhibition, opened by Dr S. O. Biobaku, Vice-Chancellor of Lagos University, portrayed cla sic influences.

The superimpo d network traceries of her paintings, those ex ng yet intractable labyrinths,

Mrs Okiki presenting a painting 'Nigerian Ingredients—Ube, Okro and Pe er' to Chief S. O. Awokoya, Chief Federal Adviser in Education while Messrs Ajayi, Okiki an usuf Grillo look on



OLUROMBI *(oil) by Ayo Ajayi—Clever use of colours an epitome of an artistic jig-saw puzzle*

Back page—'A boy on a stool' drawn by seventeen-year-old schoolboy Chima-Nwankwo, from B
Academy, Lagos

The MOSQUE *by Etso Ngu*

3

"FROM LIFE"

Above: Admiring one of the paintings is Miss Gentle (centre) standing with the artist—Onayemi Onab (left) at the exhibition

Below: Canoes—by Eve de Negri

Right: An oil painting Metamorphosis No. 4 displayed by Etso during her sixth one-man exhibition at the new Exhibition Centre

Below: OGONGO GIRL—*by Godfrey Okiki*

Mrs Etso Ngu points at her sculpture moulded from Nigerian clay called MOTHER EARTH, *while Dr S. O. Biobaku and his wife look on*

seemed to express the drama in a woman artist imprisoned. She is a woman for whom painting is the only way out of a situation from which there is no way out.

Even if her brush dried up, rid of oil, she had left behind an essential contribution to Nigerian contemporary painting as Shakespeare did in the realm of poetic couplets.

Despite her charm and *savoir-faire*, Etso struck one as an artist who is as much a mystery to herself as to others, well spoken, reserved, with an undercurrent of bridled ecstasy.

Etso seemed to endeavour to achieve harmony where there is cleavage between sculpture and painting, between horror and hilarity, cult and culture, above all between abstract art and realism. Her works identify art with life itself. One thing stands out clearly; she has affirmed her linear and stippled rhythm in some very remarkable paintings, be they 'Mother Earth' or 'Metamorphosis No. 1'.

Her message was better understood in America where she exhibited in Massachusetts; in London and Europe, where art Magazines carried streamer headlines and poured confetti on her.

Ayo Ajayi and Godfrey Aduku Okiki staged a joint exhibition between 21st–31st March, 1967. Opened by Chief S. O. Awokoya, the Federal Adviser on Education, the new Exhibition Centre was turned to a meeting place for nature and legend, for art and progress. This was so because the works of these two masters, two of a kind, portrayed the imagination of sons of Mother Nature. They told a story of beauty, of ecstasy, of folklore—all dynamic, rather than that changeless bent for copying the handiwork of nature—which like a thin thread ran through the whole gamut of old pre-independence realistic Nigerian works of art.

Godfrey Okiki, Senior Graphic Art Officer at the Lagos City Council, displayed a new char-

[illegible]

Thus: 'To those [illegible]
this type of art is [illegible]

Major Mobolaji [illegible]

Traditional water-pot from Abuja

A warrior with captives by Bisi Fakeye

Gallery Labac

THE Gallery Labac, a venture of the Nigerian Arts Council, was established a few years after the inauguration of the Nigerian Arts Council. The main purpose of establishing it was to provide the necessary outlets for art objects and handicrafts from the villages. However, it has done more than this. It has provided a pool, though not complete, from which exhibits for external exhibitions are drawn.

This Gallery functioned for a number of years at 39 Campbell Street, Lagos and is now housed at 34 Macarthy Street, Lagos. Over the years, however, it made tremendous progress for artists, connoisseurs, researchists and lovers of

Head of Oba of Benin by Ben Aye

Top: Intricately woven and designed table mat from Kano, Northern Nigeria (Medium-silco thread)

Bottom left: Terra-cotta: Oba's mask from Benin

Bottom right: Sango Staff Priestess from Western Nigeria

art objects. Art objects from all parts of Nigeria are stocked for sale in the Gallery at reasonable prices. Such objects as bronzes, paintings, wood-carvings, potteries, raffia works, books by Nigerian authors, intricately hand-woven and hand-printed fabrics, Oyo and Kano carved calabashes are some of the items of interest at the Gallery Labac.

The art objects stocked are excellent. Over and above, each art object has its own cultural connotation, depicting the diverse but rich cultural heritage of Nigeria. Hence they are traditional.

These traditional art objects are like the ancient Egyptian writing, relating in the form of signs our past glowing lives to the present. This is one of the reasons for the high regard an artist enjoys in a society.

It is pertinent to say that while the Department of Antiquities preserves the remains of our artistic heritage, the Gallery Labac disperses the same heritage as represented in contemporary art.

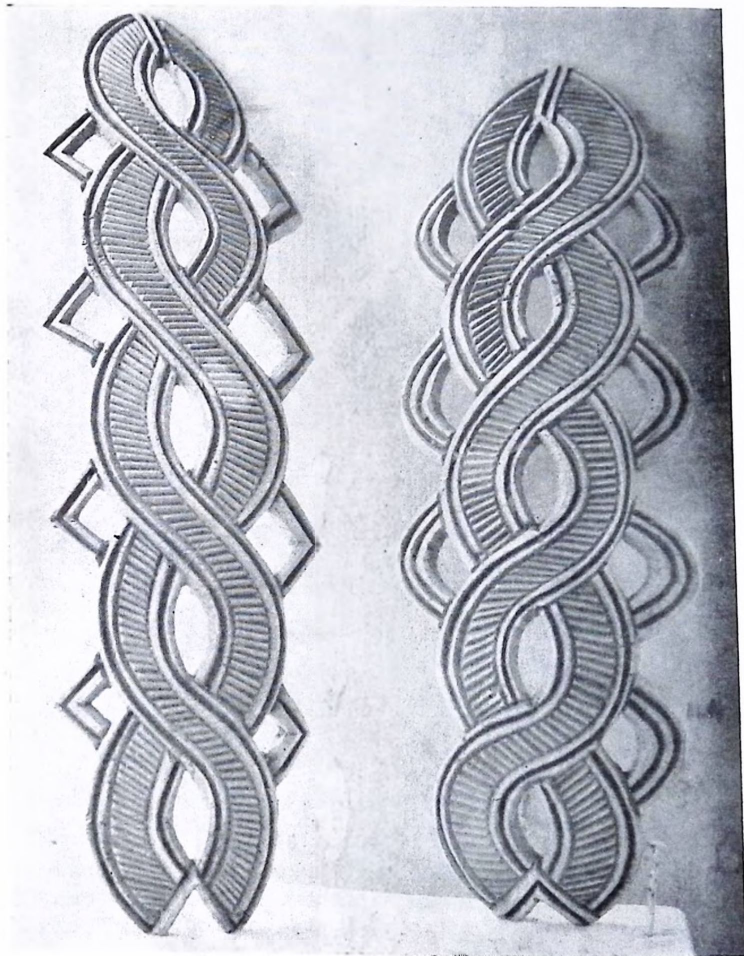
The Gallery Labac has participated in external

A slave under punishment by G. Omodanwen

Intricately woven and designed table mat from Kano, Northern Nigeria

Bust of Oba of Benin by Ben Aye

Bust of a Yoruba woman by Ben Aye



Intricately carved calabashes from Oyo, Western Region

and internal exhibitions. Since the 1963 Exhibition of Nigerian Art objects in U.S.A. and the recent ones in Glenhyrst, Ontario, Prague and Paris, outlets for our art objects have increased and widened.

It is hoped eventually to bring this Gallery to international standard so as to project Nigeria culturally, explore profitable outlets for Nigerian Art objects and help the numerous and private art galleries all over the country.

Archaeology in Eastern Nigeria

By

Donald D. Hartle

THE field of archaeology provides some answers to questions that people ask about their own origins and history. It employs techniques of digging, or excavation, that are scientific and systematic and that can sometimes unearth the past for others to study. In Eastern Nigeria, an attempt is being made to learn the facts of ancient history that can only be learned through the skills of the archaeologist, and considerable progress has been made in recent years. The following is a brief account of the work being done, of the problems faced, and some of the tentative conclusions suggested as a result of excavations in the Region.

An Archaeological Survey of Eastern Nigeria was begun in October, 1963 under the auspices of the University of Nigeria at Nsukka and further supported by a National Science Foundation Grant from Washington, D.C. United States of America in November, 1964. The initial purpose of the survey was to determine the extent of sites that would repay further investigation on a more extensive basis. Before 1963 only one site, at Igbo Ukwu, had been excavated and no systematic attempt had been made at locating sites. Historians often discuss early periods of West African history without the specific evidence that is entirely dependent upon archaeological confirmation; the obvious connection between the two disciplines made it necessary to explore the archaeological dimension for a more complete history.

In recent years, lithic, or stone, phases have been reported for both Northern and Western Nigeria. These have added greatly to the general chronological picture, or time sequence, for Nigeria as a whole. Now, with lithic materials found during both survey and excavation in the Afikpo area of the Eastern Region, the beginnings of a comprehensive picture of Nigerian history is being approached.

Since October 1963, 400 sites have been located and fourteen excavated throughout the Region. The initial problem was the solution of tropical field problems and the delineation of those areas that would be most productive as well as the least difficult to excavate; as is well known, expediency often governs the paths of archaeologists. We were not looking for sites or horizons of specific periods of Nigerian prehistory, but rather for any information at all bearing on any period, since it is the archaeologist's view that all human documents form a part of history, no one type being more valid or useful than another.

Bronze bell from the Ifeka Garden site

Map of the Eastern Region showing the location of prehistoric and historic sites

Sites recorded from various parts of the Region, some of which have been excavated, included forts, iron smelters, caves, shrines, war trenches, rock shelters, abandoned villages and various others. The artifacts recovered were pottery, iron, worked stone, shell, glass, beads and bronze. These findings reveal that the establishment of dates in Nigeria represents the most important single stumbling block to the understanding of the archaeological horizons. The close co-operation of geologists and geographers is necessary to clarify chronology as well as geochronological techniques such as radio carbon analysis, better known as Carbon-14.

In order to approach the study of prehistory in the Eastern Region, as in other places in West Africa, a variety of methods has been used. Archaeology consists not only of excavation techniques, but also of the culling of information from a wide group of sources all of which may throw light on the problems of historical analysis. Some methods used were direct evidence of written records, survey of sites whether historic or prehistoric, test-excavations and intensive excavation of some sites, seriation of pottery (attempting to determine time depth through pottery styles), ethnographic analysis and finally, and of greatest importance, interdisciplinary co-operation. Many departments in the University of Nigeria have become involved in aspects of the archaeological investigations and have contributed to the success of the survey venture. In addition to the routine procedures of excavation the problem of dealing with the materials once collected has

[illegible] of attention. Simple, but [illegible] systems have been devised [illegible] curatorial in nature and [illegible] esoteric, are important in [illegible] the museum and for use of the [illegible] interested scholars.

[illegible]ATORY AND MUSEUM

[illegible] archaeology developed, it be- [illegible] storage area was [illegible] field work being [illegible] a laboratory [illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

Bende and Abiriba. The three sites excavated in Nsukka Division are in the northern part of the Eastern Region. One, Nsukka [illegible], located on the University campus, is a 'fort' consisting of a ditch and wall encircling the top of a small hill. A shrine was excavated here, probably unrelated to the structure, and the inside of the enclosure was explored for evidence of architecture which, unfortunately, was not found. This is one of eleven forts found from [illegible] along the Nsukka escarpment to [illegible] on the Anambra River that may have been used for defence by the local people. However, it seems more likely that they were used by the Igala from Idah as 'corrals' or temporary stopping places for slaves being shipped down the river to Onitsha. Also on the University grounds a site was found on the agricultural farm in which artifacts, mostly pottery sherds, were excavated to a depth of [illegible]

Stone tools from the Ezi-Ukwu Rock Shelter, Afikpo

2,555 B.C. ± 130 and 1,460 B.C. ± 115. These suggest that this is the earliest known pottery in the East. Finally, the Isi Ugwu Obukpa Rock Shelter was excavated which yielded, among other things, fourteen examples of crudely worked stone at some depth. The three Nsukka sites represent entirely different types and further investigation is planned particularly with a view toward establishing a chronology for the area.

Four sites were excavated in the Awka Division at Enugu-Ukwu. One, an abandoned compound covering a wide area of an old farm, yielded only one piece of metal plus an assortment of pottery sherds. Another, called the C.M.S. Mission site, was interesting because of local traditions, and includes a sacred rock, above ground, in which there are eleven rather carefully spaced holes. What these may symbolize is not at all clear. It was at the Garden Site that pottery was excavated to a depth of nearly three meters; distribution was uneven throughout in both amount and style of pottery. The last site tested at Enugu-Ukwu was the Ugwu Kabia, near a sacred Ofo tree, at which pottery and stone-work were found. Traditionally, this is the earliest occupation of Enugu-Ukwu and a few post holes, indicating the former presence of structures, lend some tentative support to the story.

The most spectacular excavation in Awka Division is the Ifeka Garden Site in Ezira because of a burial of a prominent person who had been interred with various bronze and iron objects. The bronze pieces included two anklets, two bracelets, two small rings which had formed a part of a fan or staff handle, six small bells above the right arm, a cache of five larger bells left of the head, and seven to ten ceremonial objects at the feet. The last objects were found by a farmer in his garden while digging for mud to rebuild his house and were the initial discoveries leading to the excavation. Iron gongs were placed in various positions around the body and an iron sword or blade at the right side.

The bronze decorations are of particular beauty consisting mainly of exquisite fine line designs that look like filagree or lace, indentations,

cross-hatching and elevated circles and ovals. These designs are apparently more closely related to the Eastern style, as in the Cameroun area than to the West. We have been unable to obtain Carbon-14 dates from the Ezira site thus far.

It would appear that the Eastern Region is rich in early bronze work, since, in addition to the Ezira and Igbo Ukwu pieces, other bronzes have been found. For example, a bronze bell-shaped object was collected at another farm near Ezira during the planting season in 1966 and presented to the museum. It will be important to establish the relationship between the Ezira and Igbo Ukwu bronzes and, more significantly, their connection to the Benin and Ife bronzes.

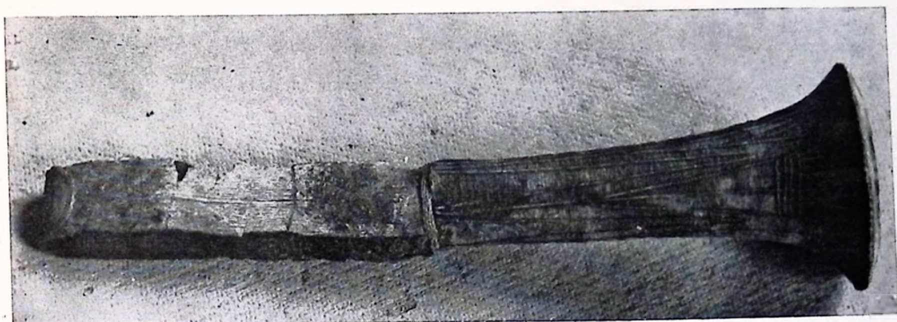
The Nwankor Site in Bende Division was excavated because, traditionally, the area had been occupied for about twelve generations with the present location of the compound being the third, and last, occupation by the same family. The alleged first occupation area was discovered to be 'bad bush' and not a habitation site. But the second area may possibly be dated around 1904 since it is said to have been abandoned 'two years after the British expedition'.

The excavations were confined to three major areas: (1) the Obu, a ceremonial area; (2) a garbage dump for the second habitation, and (3) a drinking area. The many post-holes found outlined some of the Obu walls and the entrance; other walls were destroyed by intrusive pits apparently dug while obtaining mud for rebuilding the more recent houses. Also inside the Obu, an altar was located on which pottery sherds, two metal bells and a long spearhead of iron were placed. These were found *in situ*, or undisturbed, and suggest that the Obu may have been abandoned suddenly. In a general way the excavations confirm the statement of the chief's second son that 'the Obu did not have any definite shape, the sides were open and it was covered with a thatched roof.' He added that the Obu could be entered from either side since a common path ran through it and that it was a sacrificial shrine. If, for example, a man cut his bush before the chief did, he sacrificed such items as palm-wine, goats, chickens, etc. Apparently all payment for offences to the chief were made at this shrine in the Obu.

The trench through the garbage dump produced materials to a depth of over two meters. These represent, presumably, the entire occupation span of this second habitation area and include sherds, stone-work, bits of iron, glass, beads, palm kernels, and numerous shells. Two Carbon-14 dates have been obtained for this dump: (1) A.D. 805±95; (2) Less than 145 years Before Present.

Radio-carbon analysis (C^{14}) is a method of dating archaeological sites by using samples of excavated charcoal and is extremely accurate. The only difficulty with the dates obtained here is that the more recent date was found deeper than the older one, when the reverse should have been the case. However, this may be explained by the accidental 'turning over' of the soils by digging in the area. Obviously, further charcoal samples should be tested before these dates are confirmed.

Ceremonial wine vessel—Udi area



Bronze ceremonial object from the Ifeka Garden site

The most recent and extensive excavation was the Ezi-Ukwu Ukpa Rock Shelter in Afikpo. Worked stone artifacts recovered by a student on the escarpment north of Afikpo on the Afikpo–Abakaliki road led to a survey, particularly looking for rock shelters, and the subsequent discovery of the site. Before excavation, the shelter extended about 20 feet in width, 5 feet in height, and about 6 feet deep. It is composed of heavy-grained sandstone embedded with quartz pebbles and crystals, and the sandstone ridge, extending in a NNE–SSW direction, also contains much decomposed granite. It is part of a much larger complex of ridges, composed of the same material which are outcrops—a result of differential erosion which has carved out the shale into valleys leaving the sandstone as ridges or scarps. It was discovered that the site provided an excellent 'protective' or defensive location since the inner-most part of the shelter was always dry and a semi-circular ridge of sandstone boulders enclosed the opening.

Analysis of the materials has not as yet been completed, although a few tentative conclusions

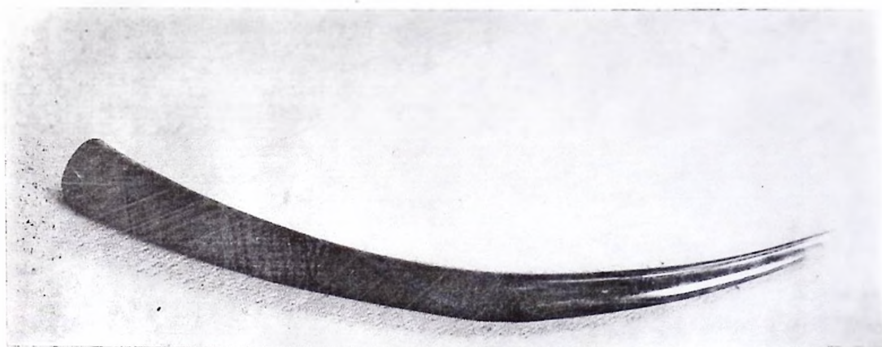
The pottery analysis in the laboratory

are beginning to appear. First of all, it is clear that this is not a pre-ceramic horizon; the stone artifacts and pottery sherds are mixed throughout. There are, though, at least two separate cultural horizons indicated, and possibly more. The upper levels (to a depth of about 12 inches) contain what might be called near-modern Afikpo pottery which is dark, usually black or dark brown or red, hard fired and sand or grit tempered. It is similar enough to modern Afikpo material so as to leave little doubt that it is the same type. It does not appear that much, if any, of the stone-work is associated with this level.

The pottery below this horizon is quite homogeneous: a light brown colour, thick, very poorly fired, and has temper materials of sand and, in many cases, seeds. One interesting feature is the presence of a pointed base ware that is not comparable to pottery anywhere else in the Region. The stone artifacts are a rather amorphous collection of bits and pieces; although a few definite tool types have been found, such as knives, balls, scrapers and hoes, the bulk of the stone remains unidentified. The lack of consistency in the manufacturing technique (many different styles and designs) is remarkable for any site, and, to compound the confusion, there are not as yet other

Professor Hartle at the Ezi-Ukwu Ukpa Rock Shelter examining the artifacts

Pottery sherd from Ezi-Ukwu Ukpa Rock Shelter, Afikpo. Top row: Near modern. Bottom row: Very early



Ceremonial horn held by titled elders—Udi area

materials for comparison. Analysis will continue in the coming months and, hopefully, some of these problems will be resolved.

As a part of the educational objectives of the University of Nigeria, Nsukka, and in addition to field excavation, courses are offered in archaeology. Thus the students leave with a fuller understanding of their own cultural prehistory. The laboratory is spacious and well-equipped, and plans are underway for expansion in the next few years. The museum, now an integral part of the University, is the only place at present in Eastern Nigeria to see a fairly extensive world view of prehistory, history and ethnology although, obviously, emphasis is placed on the Eastern Region. Many visitors from the University Community, from secondary schools in the Eastern Region, and most foreign visitors usually find their way to our displays.

Regarding the archaeological research, the first phase of research involving site survey, has been completed and enough information has been

Excavation team at Ezi-Ukwu Rock Shelter, Afikpo

Ethnographic pottery collections: Right: Ceremonial wine pot—Abak area. Left: Juju pot—Nsukka area

gathered to make further intensive surveys superfluous. Additional sites located will be added to the lists but not investigated unless unusual results may be anticipated.

Some excavations, such as the Nwankwor Site, have emphasized the mutual dependence of history and archaeology on local traditions and have indicated one of the most useful, albeit informal, methods of establishing dates for sites. The initial enquiry resulted from local traditions regarding a particular family, and excavation verified some of the original assumptions. The shrine of the Obu is particularly significant in this respect. While such traditions should always be approached cautiously, they should not be disregarded, as is sometimes done. The approach to archaeology as 'History to Prehistory' has been productive in excavations such as this.

An overall chronology begins to emerge in Eastern Nigeria as related to the rest of Nigeria. However, as certain as it is that conclusions and generalizations may be premature and inaccurate, it is equally certain that it is necessary to attempt just that in order to have a framework from which to proceed. It must be remembered that it *is* a framework subject to modification and, hopefully, clarification as new research is reported.

From a 'world view', Eastern Nigeria at the present stage of knowledge, does not contain any archaeologically very early horizons. It does, however, have a wealth of material for the past few thousand years. The earliest cultural horizon in the world which comes from East Africa is called the Oldowan; the sequent periods of Chellean, Acheullean and Sangoan are known from Nigeria, particularly from the North. In the Eastern Region it would seem that the cultural assemblages begin sometime during the early Neolithic, at a time when the Neolithic cultural inventory is simply added to a late stage of Sangoan development. The Afikpo Rock Shelter may be somewhat characteristic of this period; it is perhaps the earliest site excavated, and may be considered 'early Neolithic'. This is followed in time by the Nsukka Farm site dated at 2,555 B.C. which is well developed Neolithic.

The Nwankwor Site in Bende is next in the sequence dated at 805 A.D. and its occupation continues until about 50 years ago. The site containing the Ezira bronzes follows, although it is placed here only because of the 850 A.D. date for a bronze site at nearby Igbo Ukwu. Sometime after this, possibly seventeenth or eighteenth century, are the forts in the Nsukka area. The later periods, including the abandonment of the second habitation area of the Nwankwor Site in Bende, are very recent.

These discoveries significantly broaden the archaeological perspective of Eastern Nigeria and have prepared us to anticipate the unexpected. While the bronzes in themselves are of enormous interest, they should be considered in the light of expanded knowledge of the prehistory of the area as a whole. A few years ago, it was perfectly plain that not nearly enough had been done on which to generalize about archaeology in Eastern Nigeria. Now it is equally clear that there is a wealth of archaeological materials, some employing highly sophisticated techniques, and there is enticing evidence of a cultural continuum from the lithic periods to the present. Solutions to the problems of chronology, for all periods, are now more critical than ever since it must be remembered that these new discoveries raise many more problems than they solve.

Ekpo Ibibio mask and other wooden figures

DELTA MASQUERADES*

By

DR E. J. ALAGOA

THE following discussion of Niger Delta Masquerades is confined to the Ijo of the lower reaches of the delta. Among the Ijo particular reference is made to the prestigious masquerade playing societies of Sekiapu or Ekine found in the Eastern delta kingdoms of Nembe, Kalabari, Ibani (Bonny) and Okrika. The material comes mainly from information gathered by me from informants of the Sekiapu Society of Okpoma in Nembe, and also from accounts of the Kalabari Ekine Society by Robin Horton and P. A. Talbot.[1]

The published accounts of the Kalabari Ekine do not indicate other masquerade societies existing prior to Ekine. In other eastern delta states, particularly in Nembe and Okrika, it is known that there were other mask dancing societies or clubs before Ekine was established. It merely absorbed all previous societies and became the focus of all masquerade plays.

At Okpoma, three earlier mask societies (*Ogbo*) are remembered: *Tinbo tinbo tibi*, *Egeleu Ogbo* and *Itabala Ogbo*. The last two were named after the principal masks played by the clubs—masks representing two fish: Egeleu (*burros*) and Itabala (*Tilapia nigra*). The first club had a purpose above dancing and entertainment. They made a collective medicine for the protection of all members which they buried under their club house. As the name of the group implies, the medicine was to bring retribution on the head of whoever intended harm to a member. When Sekiapu was formed at Okpoma (from Kalabari models), *Itabala Ogbo* offered it a club house. The older society gave up its masks to Sekiapu. Sekiapu itself contracted to play at the funeral of all members of *Itabala Ogbo*.

The Sekiapu at Ogbolomabiri (Nembe) was introduced by Meinyai Orugbani from his mother's home in Kula (Kalabari), during the reign of King Kien (1846–63). He first gave it to Bassambiri, but later sold the masquerades to the Ikuli Club of Ogbolomabiri (*Ikuli* being the name of a fish: a scaleless goby of the *Bathygobius* species). This club eventually gave up its *ikuli* play and became Opu-Sekiapu of Ogbolomabiri. During the reign of King Koko (1889–98) the Kula Sekiapu came to perform at Nembe. They demanded and obtained payment of fifty cases of gin and the sacrifice of a dog. Omekwe, a descendant of the Kula woman who had brought the plays to Kula from 'the mangrove swamp' also demanded and received three cases of gin.[1(a)]

At Okrika, there existed at least two early masquerade dancing clubs, first *Sekeni*, which apparently exercised a monopoly. Then *Kiriowu*, usually playing representations of birds or animals.[1(b)]

Sekiapu has been wrongly compared to the Ekpe of the Cross River as a secret society. Sekiapu is an open society whose membership is open to all male members of the community—and even

---

*This was originally delivered at a meeting of the Nigerian Field Society, Lagos Branch, early this year.

[1] My informants were Kiapili I. Iti, Master Drummer, and David Berena, Dance Leader, of Opu Sekiapu, Okpoma (Nembe). For Ekine or Sekiapu in Kalabari see

P.A. Talbot, *Tribes of the Niger Delta; Their Religions and Customs*. (London, 1932).

Robin Horton: 'New Year in the Delta' *Nigeria* Magazine No. 67, 1960, p. 256–95. 'The Kalabari Ekine Society: A borderland of religion and art,' *Africa*, Vol. XXXIII, No. 2, 1963, p. 94–113. 'Igbo: An ordeal for aristocrats,' *Nigeria* Magazine No. 90, 1966, p. 168–83.

[1(a)] From Norman O. Atonkiri, *Onongi* or Dance Leader, Opu-Sekiapu, Ogbolomabiri.

[1(b)] D. S. T. Allison (Daniel Ibuluya) *The History of Okrika*, Unpublished MSS (1957).

Women dancing in Angalayai (Monkey) masquerade play—Nembe

children are presented by their parents. A new member is dressed in the characteristic Sekiapu fashion—a real India wrapper knotted over the right hip, eagle feather (*igo puko*) on the hat or head band, and white chalk (*itoru*) around the right eye—and drummed round the town to show him to the people. There are no secret initiation rites.

Sekiapu too did not have the same objection to women or terrorize the populace. Women, in fact, constituted the main audience for its performances in the town square or dancing arena. Further all the myths of origin concerning Sekiapu and individual masks relate how women first saw the plays in the mangrove swamps and creeks being performed by the water spirits and taught them to the men. In some cases even the sculptured headpieces are related to have been brought

Angalayai masker rattle-dancing (IGBIRI NANGA). *Performed by Nembe community in Ajegunle, Lagos*

from the land of the water spirits (*owuama*) by women. Thus the Kalabari name for Sekiapu, Ekine, derives from Ekineba, the woman who brought the plays and was drawn back into the water by the spirits. In Okpoma, the daughters of the founding members of Sekiapu are still accepted as honorary members for performing such functions as weeding the club grounds. Finally the society formally chooses a 'mother' who looks after mask players—especially when plays are prolonged and the masked men need to be fed.

Sekiapu, however, presents an atmosphere of exclusiveness. The members tend to regard themselves as specially accomplished individuals. According to my informants, Sekiapu teaches the manly virtues, and the fully committed member is supposed to have acquired manliness to an

Angalayai masquerade dancing on top of a pole

extent above all others. They even refer to non-members as uncircumcised males or 'women' when driving them off a place where a dancer is being masked. They continually shout, '*Ere so! Ere so*' (Away with women). These precautions to keep off non-members from a mask are considered necessary because of the supernatural origin of the masquerades. A player should not be identified. A fully dressed masquerader is completely covered from head to toe. He wears gloves over his hands, and his feet have to be disguised with white chalk (*itoru*).

Sekiapu usually drew up a code of conduct for its members. Fines were levied on members who arrived after the third beating of the club drum (*akusa*), for rowdy behaviour during meetings, absence, or failure to participate in performances. In Nembe, Sekiapu also ruled against certain actions disapproved of by society at large such as theft (*furu*), rape (*erewari suo*), failure to deliver a parcel (*saimoye fi*), spying on the women's toilet (*obokolo digi*). Persons who offended in these ways were punished by tying them to a stake for a prolonged period. In the regulations of the Sekiapu at Tombia (Kalabari) listed by Talbot, a number of rules are included for the guidance of the public as well.[1] Nobody was to wear feathers, the feet rattles (*igbiri*) used in masquerade plays, or to sing Sekiapu songs in town.

It was because of its appearance of impartiality and the summary manner in which Sekiapu executed its sentences that even non-members began to bring cases to it. The traditions of the eastern delta kingdoms are unanimous in assigning great authority to Sekiapu in the judicial affairs of their communities. My informants were sure the kings of these states and towns did not object because they were often members, even leaders of Sekiapu.[2] In any case, the services Sekiapu rendered in efficiently suppressing crime were appreciated. And since the dispensation of justice was one of the most obvious aspects of government, the judicial functions of Sekiapu are told in the traditions by the statement that Sekiapu members had been the governors of the communities.

In most places there are two grades of Sekiapu: a senior grade, Opu-Sekiapu, and a junior, Kala-Sekiapu in Nembe. Horton mentions other grades in Kalabari, including *Kala Siri*, *Iwo Sekiapu*, and *Elem Sekiapu*.[3] A young man first joins Kala Siri, a junior replica of Ekine, and graduates into Ekine where he becomes one of *Iwo Sekiapu* (new dancers) and then *Elem Sekiapu* (old dancers). Kala-Sekiapu at Okpoma (Nembe) stands in the same relationship to Opu-Sekiapu as the Kalabari Kala Siri to Ekine. Kala-Sekiapu has no club house and uses the services of the drummers and other specialists from Opu-Sekiapu. But unlike the Kalabari Kala Siri, membership of Kala-Sekiapu is not confined to youngsters. A man may join it at any age and remain in it for life.

The Sekiapu in one town is independent of Sekiapu in other places, but the members formed a fraternity round the delta. Thus a Sekiapu member could, was indeed obliged to, dance with any other Sekiapu if he happened to be present at a masquerade dance. According to my Okpoma informants, a Sekiapu member of one town who refrains from joining in the performance of the masquerade dance of another Sekiapu where he was visiting could be fined by its members. A Sekiapu member then is welcome among Sekiapu members wherever a Sekiapu exists.

SEKIAPU ORGANIZATION FOR A PLAY

All members of Sekiapu in Okpoma (as in other Sekiapu in Nembe *Ibe*) belong to one of seven *Agba*. The number seven is determined by the masquerades played at each dancing session. Most masquerades are played in sevens, with a few exceptions. Each *Agba* has the responsibility of decking out a masquerade and seeing that it performs according to custom. Since the duties of the *Agba* are equal, their numerical strength is kept at par. This is ensured by not sharing out new members until their number comes to seven or an exact multiple of seven. The leader of

[1] Talbot (1932), p. 301.

[2] Obasi (c. 1850) and Obu (c. 1890) were cited as Amanyanabo (Kings) of Okpoma who were also heads of Sekiapu.

[3] R. Horton (1963), p. 100–1.

each *Agba* is held responsible for the performance of the group and for the custody of the single headpiece of each type of masquerade played by the Sekiapu. These headpieces are kept in the homes of the *Agba* leaders or in the houses of members of the *Agba;* and less often in the Sekiapu Club house—because it is feared that some *Agba* exchange inferior headpieces for finer ones belonging to other *Agba*.

Among the Kalabari, it would appear that masquerades belong to kin-groups (or Houses), which lead them out to play—the success or failure of the masker causing pride or shame to his kin or House.[1] In Nembe an unsuccessful dancer would indeed shame his close kin, but the kin-group is not concerned in the play, and the *Agba* that support the single masks are not made up of kin.

The Kalabari Houses own particular masquerades if members of these Houses first saw the plays in the mangrove forest and creeks; introduced them from neighbouring peoples; or if a member of the House became specially expert in playing the mask. Thus the 'Ekpe' masquerade belongs to the George Amakiri House because it first appeared to a woman of that House at Minama,[2] 'the *Okuku* belongs to the Black Duke because it was introduced from 'the Ijaw of Brass District' by Black Duke;[3] and the Igbo to the Jack Rich House, apparently because a member of that House, Jiji, became the greatest player of the Igbo masquerade.[4] The reverse is the case in Nembe where the masquerade belongs to Sekiapu even where the individual innovator is still alive.[5]

There are very many individual masks, each distinguished by a peculiar headpiece, a set of drum rhythms, songs and dance. Talbot (1932) named forty masquerades played by the Kalabari, while, according to Horton, the Kalabari *ekine* play some 'fifty-odd masquerades'.[6]

[1] R. Horton (1966).
[2] Talbot (1932), p. 311.
[3] Talbot (1932), p. 316.
[4] R. Horton (1966), p. 179.
[5] *E.g.* the Igbelegbe (Egbelegbe) masquerade was brought to Okpoma from Tombia (Kalabari) by my informant, Kiapili Iti, but belongs to Sekiapu and not to the Iti House.
[6] P. A. Talbot (1932), p. 310–12. Robin Horton (1966), p. 179.

TYPES OF MASKS

All delta masks are believed to have come from the water spirits (*oru* or *owu*) and, each mask, accordingly represents its particular spirit. But the headpieces, dances and characterization of the plays do not always carry any religious or supernatural significance. Thus several of the headpieces represent fishes, and the plays associated with them represent a characterization of these fishes. Thus egeleu (*burros*), and Itabala (*tilapia nigra*) of Okpoma have already been mentioned. Masks representing the crocodile (*Segi*—Nembe, or *Seki*—Kalabari), the hippopotamus (*Otoba*—Nembe, *Otobo*—Kalabari), jack mackerel (*Ekwe*—Nembe), saw-fish, *Pristis perroteti* (*Oki*—Nembe), and the Shark (*Ofirima*—Nembe) are represented in masquerade plays. There are also animal representations. These include the tortoise (*Ikagi*—Nembe, *Ikaki*—Kalabari) and the monkey (*Angalayai*—Nembe, *Peri-Angala*—Kalabari).

The majority of the masquerades represent human characters, abstractions, or water spirits. Thus there are masquerades that depict the rogue (*Angbo*—Nembe, *Aj[illegible]-Yingi*—Kalabari); the trouble-shooter (*Tikpoli*—Nembe), and *Ereworiowu* in Kalabari which says abusive words against women. There are also the three Igbo masquerades which depict three attributes of the aristocratic life of the delta: Peri-Igbo which shows the martial aspect, Eretoi-Igbo showing a life of pleasure and good living, and Pipili-Igbo showing a chief who also stoops to lowly tasks like teaching his own slaves essential skills by demonstration.

In addition to classification by what they represent, masquerades may also be classified by (*i*) the manner in which their headpieces are made and the player dressed for dancing, and (*ii*) the peculiarities of its dance.

Most of the headpieces are sculptured wooden representations of a spirit, fish or animal. But other headpieces are made up each time the masquerade is to be played. These usually consist of a frame of bamboo frond covered with cloth or paper and decorated with coloured plumes. How-

Drummers at Angalayai masquerade play. Note drum master playing a battery of talking drums

ever made, delta masquerades are rarely made to be worn over the face. They always have to be attached to a basket-work covered with cloth. And when this basket helmet is worn over the head, the headpiece itself sits on top of the head—so that the fish or animal would be 'swimming' or 'standing' naturally on the player's crown. In this position, the headpiece may not be clearly visible to the spectators, especially where plumes and other decorations are added.

The bronze headpieces of the Ogoni masquerade played at Odioma (Nembe) are, however, believed to have been made by the water spirits and brought home by a woman, Kumolagha.

In any case, the visual effect of a masquerade is achieved by its total make-up from head to toe. Thus the masks representing nobility are richly ornamented with plumes, mirrors and expensive clothes. Other masquerades are dressed in a manner appropriate to their character.

In Nembe all masquerades played by Sekiapu belong to the Club and not to individual Houses or lineage groups. But some of the masquerades are believed to belong to the whole community—that is, even to those outside Sekiapu. Accordingly where only the male members of Sekiapu ma

dance in Sekiapu masquerades, even women may join in the dance at specified points during the playing of community masquerades.

STAGING A MASQUERADE

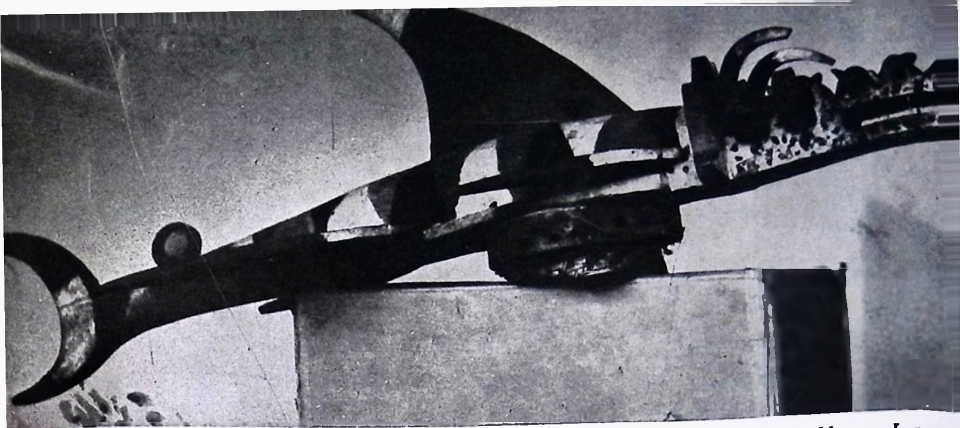
The Kalabari who have the most elaborate system of masquerade plays in the delta perform them in a cycle that is said to be completed from one to seven years or more. The beginning of each cycle is preceded by the performance of sacrifices to the ancestors—the past kings and founders of Houses—the *Nduen Alali.*[1]

Before the first masquerade may be played, the Sekiapu members go down to a spot on the New Calabar River known as the Beach of the Water Spirits (*Owu Poku*), and offer a sacrifice of a dog and goat. They are then believed to bring home with them the various water spirits impersonated in the individual masks, to ensure a successful performance. And before each masquerade is played, sacrifices are made to the patron goddess of the club, *Ekineba*, and also to Owomakaso, the national goddess of the Kalabari. Appropriate rituals return the water spirits to *Owu Poku* and to *Aku*, their home in the water.

Several nights of rehearsals precede the public performance in the town square or dancing arena. In Nembe this arena is usually surrounded by the shrines of past kings and founders of Houses; and the club house of Sekiapu stands only a short distance away.

[1] Talbot, P. A. (1932), p. 307–8.

Sekiapu members and masquerade dancing the dignified EBIKI *dance step (Kalabari)*



The headpiece of the Agbani masquerade from Abonnema (Kalabari), now at the Nigerian Museum, Lagos

The rituals described for Kalabari do not feature in Nembe Sekiapu masquerades. The only obvious ritual act is performed on the morning of the public display, when all the dressed up masks first dance at the main water-front touching the water with a staff. This *fula piri* ceremony, conceived as receiving permission and strength from the water spirits, is followed by a short morning dance session. The full performance begins in the afternoon and usually closes by sun-down.

The audience seated or standing round the arena already know a lot about the form of drumming and dancing to be accomplished in the particular masquerade to be displayed. It is usually a critical, but also appreciative audience which expects the play to go according to custom and to reach or excel the standards of previous performances. Although each masquerade has peculiar variations of drum, dance and song, there are a number of dance steps that are common to all Sekiapu plays.

(*i*) *Igba mangi*: This is a 'running' dance of all the Sekiapu members round the arena. It is done to a brisk drum rhythm and is usually the opening act, the Sekiapu being led out of their Club house to the dancing field by the Dance Master. It is also danced at intervals during the performance to enliven the show.

(*ii*) *Ada segi* (*Ebiki*): This is danced to a slower and more dignified rhythm in a circle in the field, sometimes with the seven or so masquerades interspersed among the members. It is in this dance that women may join in a community masquerade. It is usually during this dance that individual dancers perform the *ebiki* dance step: they lower their heads, exposing their backs, which they wriggle by a rhythmic movement of the hips and legs.

(*iii*) *Kike pan*: When the members leave the field for the masquerades, they gather in a corner to sing Sekiapu songs, or occasionally cheer in a peculiar Sekiapu style—*kike pan*. The idea is that whether they are dancing in a circle or gathered in a corner of the arena, the Sekiapu members should not be idle.

(*iv*) *Elu*: The *elu* dance is one that the members do to relieve a lull in the performance. Members singly or in groups of two or more dance from their corner to the drum stand and back. The *elu* dancer spreads his arms and legs, and, slightly bent forward, takes short steps forward by rhythmically flipping his knees inwards.

(*v*) *Pegele:* This is another brisk and acrobatic piece of dance performed by the more agile Sekiapu members. When the drums begin to beat a call to *pegele*, the members begin to perform, preferably singly in close succession, from one end of the field to the other. A repeat performance brings them back to their original end. The dancer jumps up vertically and at the same instant twists in such a manner that he spins in the

Ebe masquerade dancing before the drums (Kalabari)

air in a near-horizontal position; so that, taking off on a left foot, he lands on a right a pace or two in advance of his starting point. Expert exponents of the *pegele* dance can be spectacularly acrobatic, moving across the arena in a flash, their bodies appearing to float across the air in a horizontal spin.

(*vi*) *Igbiri nanga:* Persons seeing delta masquerade dances for the first time seem to be most easily impressed by the rattle dance of the maskers. Delta masquerades have bunches of rattles tied to their legs just above the ankle. At points in the play, each masker is led to the drum stand in turn, and accompanies the drums with his feet rattles. The drums beat different rhythms for different masquerades and at different times during a performance; and the masker is expected to jingle his feet rattle in imitation of the drum beats. He does this by dancing on the balls of his feet, raising his body and feet lightly off the ground and bringing the feet down in patterns that produce the required rattle music.

(*vii*) *Kule da* (Nembe), *Oru da* (Kalabari): This performance of answering drum calls forms a climax to the display of some masquerades but not others. It is a socially significant performance and a great ordeal for the maskers and their leaders.

In the masquerades where it is done,

either leading Sekiapu members or the masks and their leading supporters appear on the arena to face a test of understanding the drum language. The mask and supporter facing the ordeal dance round the field until the Master Drummer calls the drum praise of an ancestor, god, or a town. They must then face the direction of the town, or the shrine of the ancestor or god. The successful performer is carried shoulder-high by his friends and relations, while the dancer who mistakes a drum name goes off the field in shame.[1]

The importance of *Kule da*, or *Oru da*, derives from two circumstances. First the significance of the drum praises. These embody in their meaning the essential character and, or, the principal achievements of the ancestor, god or community. Accordingly, every adult member of an Ijo community is supposed to know the drum praises of the principal gods and historical figures of his and of neighbouring peoples. To demonstrate such knowledge is commendable, to be publicly shown to be ignorant, shameful. Second, as Horton points out, successful performance proclaims the Ekine member a fully cultured man.[2] He is one who is versed in the tone patterns of speech, proverbs, traditional literature, imagery, the myth and history of the community. The performance of a masquerade in which this ordeal features throws all members back to intensive review of their knowledge of drum praises and drum language.

(*viii*) *Egberi mie:* The performance of some of the masquerades includes tableaux purporting to represent incidents in the life of the water spirits. The incidents portrayed are often amusing, but could also carry the barb of social criticism and comment, or a message. The *egberi* is essentially a play within a play and is sketchy in outline and comes close to being mime, since words are cut down to a minimum. The few utterances in song or speech are rendered in a squeaky falsetto, in imitation of the water spirits.

The *egberi* in a masquerade play is merely an 'Embellishment', but the spectators look forward to it as a funny relief.

CONCLUSION

We find then that there has been a very long tradition of playing masquerades on a well ordered basis. There were societies of artists performing in public places to informed audiences which expected high standards. The Sekiapu or Ekine Societies have arisen as the highest point of organization of masquerade dancing artists, and they have come to serve many functions in the delta societies where they exist. They are first and foremost societies of dancers. But since their dances are concerned with the water spirits, some religious element has crept in. They have to keep on the right side of these spirits during performances, and these spirits, as well as the gods and ancestors, may be expected to shower blessings on the community if the Sekiapu plays please them. Sekiapu also encourages arts other than those of dancing. Sculptors in wood have no better customers—outside the priesthood—than Sekiapu. And the art of the drummer, and the preservation of the folklore behind the drum language are best served by Sekiapu.

It is for these reasons that Sekiapu members consider themselves men among men—and seek to stress their importance in the community by slightly exaggerating their ancient governmental function of dispensing justice.

[1] In Kalabari *Ekine* he is carried off by the members. (Horton, 1966, p. 175–6).
[2] Horton (1966), p. 180–1.

YORUBA RELIGIOUS CARVING

Pagan and Christian Sculpture in Nigeria and Dahomey

Kevin Carroll

A fascinating and comprehensive account of Yoruba art, lavishly and informatively illustrated. This book examines Nigeria's artistic traditions from earliest times (*Nok* and *Benin* sculpture) to the present day and discusses the part played by sculpture in the country's customs and religion.
This book breaks new ground by giving a detailed biography and account of four individual Nigerian carvers who here discuss their techniques and artistic intentions. The accompanying photographs help the reader trace and understand their artistic development.
This book concerns not only Nigeria but Africa as a whole, for the author is concerned with the adaptation of traditional forms to create a modern and vital African idiom. Those who have admired the carvings at the University Teaching Hospital, or Cathedral, at Ibadan will here have an opportunity to deepen their understanding of the problems involved.
'One of the finest and most penetrating studies ever made in the field of African art.' **William Fagg,** British Museum
2 four-colour plates, 128 *black-and-white photographs,* 22 *line drawings, end-papers with map.*

90s

Geoffrey Chapman
London—Dublin—Melbourne

HAVE YOU DISCOVERED ART IN NIGERIA?

READ 'NIGERIA' MAGAZINE, A FEDERAL PUBLICATION

ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION (4 ISSUES)

8s LOCAL, 12s OVERSEAS

NIGERIA'S FIRST EDUCATIONAL, CULTURAL AND LITERARY MAGAZINE

BACK ISSUES AVAILABLE

ISSUE No.	QUANTITY	
70	500	(Approx.)
71	1,000	"
72	1,000	"
73	200	"
74	1,000	"
75	200	"
76	1,000	"
77	500	"
78	200	"
79	500	"
80	200	"
81	800	"
82	600	"
83	1,000	"
84	2,000	"
85	2,000	"
86	2,000	"
87	2,000	"
88	2,000	"
89	1,000	"

There's 25% rebate for Colleges and Institutions where orders for large numbers (above eight) are placed.

PHONE:		
	Office	23134
	Editor	26592
	Business Editor	20643

Nigeria Magazine
Literary Supplement

THE WEST AFRICAN ENGINEERING COMPANY (NIGERIA) LIMITED

30, WHARF ROAD, P. O. BOX 388, APAPA. TELEPHONE 55368, 55061.
13, ABA ROAD, P. O. BOX 595, PORT HARCOURT. TELEPHONE 21200.

ELECTRICAL WHOLESALERS

Stockists of:

*CONDUIT and accessories $\frac{3}{4}''$ to 2″

*CABLES conductors, winding wires in all sizes and types

*SWITCHGEAR and FUSEGEAR 5 Amp to 800 Amp

*MINIATURE CIRCUIT BREAKERS, Distribution boards, consumers' units

*EARTH LEAKAGE CIRCUIT BREAKERS

*ELECTRICAL ACCESSORIES for any type of installation

*LAMPS 15 watt to 1500 watt, and FLUORESCENT TUBES

*LIGHTING FITTINGS AND FLOODLIGHTS

*ELECTRIC MOTORS and STARTERS up to 30 h.p.

*MEGGERS, AVOMETERS, Instruments and Testers

*BELLS, BUZZERS, INDICATORS

*MAINS CLOCKS

*INSULATING MATERIALS

*B.L.P LIGHTNING PREVENTORS

NATIVE HOUSE RULE OF SOUTHERN NIGERIA

By

Dr T. N. Tamuno

NATIVE House Rule or the House system of the former Protectorate of Southern Nigeria was *par excellence* an institution of the coastal ethnic groups of the Niger Delta, say, from about the mouth of the Forcados River in the west to about the estuary of the Calabar River in the east, and not of other ethnic clusters in the interior, *e.g.*, the Ibos, Ekois, Ogoni, and the Eleme, to name only a few. It featured prominently among the Niger Delta Ijaws, and to some extent too among the Efiks, and the Itsekiri of Sapele and Warri. It is not clear whether the Edos of the old Benin district had a similar structure traditionally.

Again, the House system of the Niger Delta states, when cursorily compared with other Nigerian governmental institutions, appears distinctive. True, the Yorubas of the former Lagos Protectorate and the Nupes of Northern Nigeria had *quasi*-'House' systems as could be inferred from the Yoruba expression '*Bale*' (Father of the House or Father of the Town)[1] and the Nupe '*Emitso*' (Owner of the House),[2] yet the 'House' structure of the Yorubas and the Nupes was not analogous in every respect to that of the Niger Delta states. Among the Nupes, for instance, the *Emitso* was the senior male member of the 'house-group'.[3] Age, however, was not always a crucial factor in the choice of a House head among the Niger Delta states. Moreover, the position of slaves and other non-kindred groups in relation to 'Houses' in both Yorubaland and Nupe is not clear.

A system which through 'canoe boys' or paddlers provided mobility for traders and goods was ideally suited to the commercial needs of a region of criss-crossing creeks such as the Niger Delta. In days when launches and other motor craft were rare and infrequent the House system to middlemen traders was of great advantage by solving to some extent their transport problems. Such traders did not discriminate between free men, slaves, and ex-slaves, in their choice of 'canoe boys'.

Opinions differ concerning the origin of the House system or Native House Rule. 'The House System,' according to Dr M. D. Jeffreys, a former political officer in Nigeria, 'was a product of, and a response to, the European slave trade'.[4] Mr A. F. F. P. Newns, as District Officer, Degema, lent support to Jeffreys' view when he observed: 'The House System was built up on slavery, forced labour, tribal war and toppings: it was first a war organization for the slave trade then became in essence a trading institution. . . .'[5] That the House system antedated the European slave trade in West Africa was, however, recognized by Newns in his *Reorganization Report on the Kalabari Clan*. 'In brief,' wrote Newns, 'the Houses were originally democratic compounds which had their own war canoes. They developed into war organizations for the slave trade . . . then with the cessation of the slave trade they became the equivalent of trading companies.'[6] The views of Jeffreys and Newns notwithstanding, I contend that the European slave trade did not stand to the House system in the simple relationship of cause and effect. Indeed, Capt. E. B. Wauton, a former District Officer, Brass Division, appears to have recognized this fact: for

---

1. A. K. Ajisafe, *The Laws and Customs of the Yoruba People*, Lond., 1924, p. 3.
2. S. F. Nadel, *A Black Byzantium*, Lond., 1961, p. 29.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 30.
4. M. D. W. Jeffreys, *Old Calabar and Notes on the Ibibio Language*, Calabar, 1935, p. 57.
5. A. F. F. P. Newns, *Reorganization Report on the Kalabari Clan*, 1947, p. 37.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 42.

concerning the Nembe-Ijo he remarked: 'This so-called 'House' system is, so to speak, the life-blood of the tribe.... No one can say how old the system is. All that can be said is that, with the Nembe people, it is as old as the sun.'[1]

Amidst such a clash of views, I accept an opinion expressed by Dr G. I. Jones, another former political officer in Nigeria, in 1957 that the House structure might have originated as 'a corporate kin group,' which developed by the nineteenth century into 'a trading and fighting corporation able to man and equip a war canoe.'[2] One condition for the formation of sub-Houses among the Nembe-Ijo, for instance, was the ability to have forty or more 'canoe boys.'[3]

A House in the nineteenth century comprised free-born and servile members. In certain respects, a House was analogous to 'extended families' found elsewhere in Nigeria.[4] An important difference, however, lay in the fact that the composition of a House was so elastic that it enabled 'foreigners'—persons without blood relationship, *e.g.*, slaves and other immigrant groups, to participate fully in the obligations and privileges of membership side by side with those who had blood affinity. The House head was chosen through an election by all the members. The office of House head was not necessarily hereditary, but went to any able, successful and wealthy member of a House who won a majority of votes after a House election.[5] Previous servile status was no bar, among the Ijos of the Niger Delta, to headship of a House.[6] Among the Efiks, however, servile status constituted a 'bar sinister' when the question of 'eligibility for high office or membership of Grand Egbo arose.'[7] The choice of a House head, among the Nembe-Ijos, was ratified by the paramount ruler (*Amanyanabo*) in council. After a public investiture ceremony, which usually involved 'chalking' of the head of the candidate, the House head became a member of the king's council.[8] The House head could have a 'vice-chief' and other elders to assist him; these together with him constituted the 'council' of the House; and managed its affairs.[9] Headship of Houses, within the limits of my knowledge, has been the exclusive prerogative of males. A woman of outstanding ability, sagacity, influence and wealth, for instance, among the Nembe-Ijos, could only take part in the deliberations of a House and not assume 'any office involving political authority'.[10]

The House system provided an important instrument of traditional village government in various ways. It provided politically, the most important pivot around which the different sections of a village revolved; formed economically, the most effective unit for co-operative trading; and engendered, socially, an *esprit de corps*.

For his multiple functions, the House head had to combine in himself the tenderness and affection of a father towards his 'children', the astuteness of a successful trader, and the competence and sagacity of a functionary who was both an administrator and an arbiter. The House head, in spite of his theoretically strong position, was required to consult the House council in which the heads of the different families constituting the House were represented. A House, it should be realized, was after all an association for mutual co-operation between the members and their head. This was an association based on goodwill and not force. At a time when the community, or its unit the extended family, was responsible for the well-being and safety of its members, the House system constituted not only a *censor morum* and social welfare unit but also a defensive bulwark for its members against attack by other Houses or communities.

As a rule, the House head had duties[11] to perform and privileges to enjoy. It was his duty to see to the general welfare of every member. He could give away in marriage any female member of his House; generally,

---

1. Deg. Dist. 3/4/1, *Capt. Wauton's Notes*, n.d., p. 33.
2. G. I. Jones, *Report of (sic) the Position, Status, and Influence of Chiefs and Natural Rulers in the Eastern Region of Nigeria*. Enugu, 1957, p. 36.
3. E. N. Dickinson, *An Intelligence Report on the Nembe Clan in the Brass Area*, 1932, p. 22.
4. E. N. Dickinson, *op. cit.*, p. 20.
5. *Ibid.*, pp. 9 and 11–12.
6. K. O. Diké, *Trade and Politics in the Niger Delta*, Oxford, 1956, p. 36.
7. Calprof/2/688, *The Efiks*; anonymous and no dates given. This document is available at the National Archives, Ibadan.
8. E. N. Dickinson, *op. cit.*, p. 12.
9. *Ibid.*
10. *Capt. Wauton's Notes.*
11. C. O. 520/107, Egerton to Harcourt, conf. 19th Oct., 1911, encl. 1(*a*).

marriages within a House were preferred to others outside it. As the custodian of a House fund—the local treasury of this unit—he was responsible for the upkeep of the old and infirm, and for making credit available to enterprising traders and people engaged in other professions. Co-operative trading and mutual assistance thus provided the sinews of House solidarity. In times of difficulty, a member was maintained from the House fund. In his old age, a former useful member of the House looked upon it to support him, bury him when dead, and bring up any children he might have left behind. It was this element of mutual support which gave members of a House a feeling of social security.

The House head also expected obligations[1] from members. The members of a House were expected to contribute to the maintenance of the House and the support of their head. Contributions from them were kept in the House fund from which expenses were paid for. Thus during the nineteenth century, European merchants dealt exclusively through the House heads whom they designated 'First-class Trader, Second-class Trader.'[2] The European traders paid an *Amanyanabo* (king) 'comey'—a trade tax—while the House heads received from these traders another trade tax—'toppings'—which amounted to a ten per cent to twenty-five per cent rebate on every cask of palm-oil sold to these merchants by members of Houses.[3] Also, profits[4] from the work of members—either as traders, farmers, or even fishermen—went to the House fund. A debt contracted by a House head on behalf of his House was paid for by contributions from the members where the House fund was insufficient to meet such expenses. Such debts could be incurred by a House head in litigation to defend House property or maintain the rights of the House if infringed by recalcitrant members or outsiders. In time of war he called upon the members to man his war canoe or canoes. Some of the members as 'canoe boys' formed the crew of his gigs.[5] He demanded and often received labour for private and House work.

All persons, irrespective of status, owned private property, for as long as they remained members of House. The ownership of land was communal. The House head, as the trustee of all House land, was responsible to the village council for its use. There was, however, an unsatisfactory arrangement, in my opinion, as regards the disposal of property when a member of a House died or deserted a House. In this respect, H.P. Chamley, a District Commissioner, Calabar, for nine years, distinguished in 1911 between 'freeborn' and 'non-freeborn' members of Houses.[6] If Chamley is to be believed, the property of a 'freeborn' on death passed to the eldest of the family, and not to the House head; whereas the property of a dead 'non-freeborn' member went to the 'House head'.[7] Chamley failed to explain whether a House head could only make claims to such property if he had owned the 'non-freeborn', or was a close relation of the master. It did appear, as J. Winkfield, the acting Chief Justice of Southern Nigeria, recognized in 1911,[8] that under native practice the private property of a dead servile member of a House belonged to 'his master'. Bassey Duke Ephraim on behalf of the *Obong* and chiefs of Calabar in April 1911 justified the practice whereby servile members of Houses were not entitled to private property if they deserted a House. Bassey Duke Ephraim's contention was that a servile member of a House was 'purchased and brought into the house (*sic*) empty-handed; the Head of House allows him some money to trade with and by which after a time he becomes wealthy. While in the House he possesses this continually; but where he seeks redemption he leaves all that he owned including immoveable property, and goes as he came.'[9]

As regards the disposal of private property there was under the House system a harsh distinction between free and servile members. There was, however, no clear disparity as to a House head's preference in selling or pawning members either 'to meet difficulties' of a House or in getting rid of criminal members. There is force in Winkfield's suggestion in October 1911 that 'if the conditions were equal, the slave member would

---

1. *Ibid.*, encl. 1(*b*).
2. Newns, *op cit.*, p. 28.
3. *Ibid.*
4. *Ibid.*
5. A gig was a specially decorated canoe, about 30–40 feet long, used on private and ceremonial occasions.

6. C. O. 520/107, Egerton to Harcourt, conf. 19th Oct., 1911, encl. 1(*a*).
7. *Ibid.*
8. *Ibid.*, encl. 1(*b*).
9. *Ibid.*, encl. 1(*a*).

be sold or pawned in preference to a freeborn, but there was no rule which made it obligatory upon the chiefs to sell or pawn a slave rather than a free man.'[1]

The solidarity of a House depended not only on the full, active co-operation of its members but also on the integrity, ability and efficiency of the House head in handling the manifold problems which could, and did, arise from time to time. A House head who believed and practised the doctrine of 'might is right' was bound to lose his members, through desertion, before long—a predicament which would have been a poor exchange for the retention of absolute powers. In my view Jeffreys over-stated his case when he observed 'that the authority of the Head of a House was not based on Native law and custom, but on the principle that "might is right".'[2] In other words, Jeffreys thought a House head was an absolute ruler, in fact, a near-Hobbesian Leviathan, which he was not: for a House head was subject to checks and balances—the sober advice and control of his council. On the whole, treatment of House members by their head was not uniformly bad or oppressive.

The House system, as far as servile members were concerned, became anachronistic after the abolition of the slave trade in 1807 and of slavery in 1833 throughout the British Empire. A major problem which thereafter confronted British administrators in Southern Nigeria during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was a reasoned approach to the question of domestic slavery in general and of Native House Rule in particular.

Britain's keen desire to abolish slave-dealing in areas where she had jurisdiction or exercised administrative control clashed with other problems which arose from administrative policy. When the British Government, after a period of vacillation, decided to administer the indigenous peoples of the Niger Coast protectorate (subsequently the protectorate of Southern Nigeria), it endeavoured to do so through their traditional authorities and native institutions (which in certain cases it 'reformed')—in short, through a system which sometimes had the outward appearance of 'Indirect Rule'. Some of the chiefs in the Niger Delta states, who where also middlemen traders, had in 1889 expressed their strong desire to retain domestic slaves.[3] There was as such the problem of what to do with the domestic slavery aspect of Native House Rule: reform the institution in this respect or abolish it in its entirety? A government which imposed upon itself a task of raising native institutions that fell short of the norms of western European 'civilization' to 'a higher standard of morality'[4] certainly had to do 'something' to the domestic slavery part of the House system.

The British Government, particularly after 1891, was thus in the uncomfortable position of doing away with the House system in as much as it was closely linked with the problem of domestic slavery, and thereby antagonizing principal traders *cum* native authorities. On the other hand, British administrators could sanction the House system in an unmitigated form, and thus embarrass themselves internationally, especially after the severe measures proposed against slave-dealing in Africa at the Brussels Conference of 1889–90, by winking at a form of slavery practised under Native House Rule. There were other complementary problems: the danger of social and political unrest if domestic slavery were immediately removed; and inadequate transport and labour facilities to tap the vast economic resources (particularly palm produce) of the protectorate of Southern Nigeria. In the circumstances, British administrators adopted a *via media*: gradual abolition of domestic slavery, and the retention of the House system in such a way that free and servile members would suffer from no visible disabilities.

A noticeable mistake which the British Government made in sanctioning a utilitarian native institution such as the House system was to extend, by legislation[5] and administrative practice, its operation to the whole

---

1. *Ibid.*, encl. 1(*b*).
2. Jeffreys, *op. cit.*, pp. 58–9.
3. Middlemen traders and chiefs urged Sir C. MacDonald during his inquiries in the Niger Delta states of 1889 to reserve to them, *inter alia*, their right to retain domestic slaves in accordance with native law and practice. *See* F. O. 84/1940, MacDonald to F. O., 12th June 1889, and incl.
4. Under the provisions of the supreme court proclamation, No. 6 of 1900, of S. Nigeria, the supreme court could only observe and enforce native laws and customs 'not being repugnant to natural justice, equity and good conscience'.
5. C. O. 588/1, The Native House Rule proclamation, No. 26 of 1901.

of the protectorate of Southern Nigeria.[1] In an age when the British administrators of Southern Nigeria paid inadequate attention to the value of social anthropology in governing people whose ways they scarcely understood, it was easy for them to impose Native House Rule on all the various ethnic groups comprising the protectorate of Southern Nigeria. The House system thus became an approved native institution, so far as the British administration was concerned, in areas where it was not part of the traditional form of government.

The extent of the ethnic groups which Sir R. Moor, as High Commissioner of the Protectorate of Southern Nigeria, 1900–3, might have had in mind before enacting his Native House Rule law could be ascertained from the consultations he had with some chiefs early in 1901. Moor in a despatch to the Colonial Office in July 1901 claimed that he had consulted the wishes of 'representative chiefs' at Old Calabar,[2] Opobo, Okrika, Bonny, Degema, Brass, Warri, Sapele, Benin River and Benin City, before making the Native House Rule proclamation, No. 26 of 1901. There is, however, no record that he, and his successor, Sir W. Egerton (1904–12), obtained the consent of representatives of other ethnic groups in the protectorate of Southern Nigeria before this law was applied to them.

In anticipation of a successful termination of an Aro expedition (1901–2), Moor had by order No. 9 of 1901 applied a proclamation prohibiting slave-dealing to all parts of the protectorate from 1st January, 1902. Consequently, two main problems awaited solution: first, how to retain domestic slaves under improved conditions; and second, how to keep a continuous labour supply after the abolition of slavery throughout the protectorate. The former problem he solved by enacting the Native House Rule Proclamation, 1901, and the latter by amending the provisions of a Master and Servant Proclamation, 1901.[3]

Moor's decision concerning labour was influenced by commercial interests and native practice in the coastal regions of the protectorate of Southern Nigeria. He understood that on account of transport difficulties domestic slaves, among other things, provided the 'motive power' for trade in the Niger Delta. Although there was no mass emancipation of domestic slaves under the Niger Coast protectorate administration (1893–9), yet by 1898 Moor had noticed 'a revolution' in trade because domestic slaves engaged in commerce independently of their Houses.[4] Furthermore, he had witnessed the crippling effect on trade of the old practice whereby House heads demanded and received from the trading members, or from other merchants trading with them, a percentage of the turn-over, about ten per cent to twenty-five per cent, known in the various areas as 'topping' or 'workbar'. At the same time, Moor received complaints that 'the Boys'—that is, members of Houses—had 'become more arrogant' and desirous of personal freedom. He, therefore, sought 'to improve the condition of these slaves by removing them in some way from the state of slavery' lest there 'be a danger of a general uprising which would mean anarchy, crime, and a general stoppage of trade.'[5] The magnitude of Moor's alarm can be gauged from the fact that the protectorate at the time (1900) had no safety-valve of a poor law.

Moor's solution of the above problems was a compromise: the Native House Rule proclamation, which ratified the duties and obligations which a House head and a member owed each other under native law and custom. It also endeavoured to mend the cracks which had appeared in the traditional system through evasions by both parties to a solemn though unwritten contract of service. A member who evaded his obligations, after the coming into effect of this proclamation, was liabl[e] on conviction to a fine not exceeding £50, or t[o] imprisonment not over one year, or both. A Hous[e]

[1] By an order in council of 27th Dec., 1899, the protectorate of S. Nigeria comprised the Niger Coast protectorate and territories south of, and including, Idah taken over from the Royal Niger Company. After the amalgamation of the protectorate of S. Nigeria, and the colony and protectorate of Lagos in May 1906, the combined territories were divided into three provinces: eastern, central and western. The western province comprised the old colony and protectorate of Lagos; while the protectorate of S. Nigeria became the eastern and central provinces.

[2] The British Government changed the name 'Old Calabar' to Calabar in May 1904.

[3] C. O. 588/1, No. 3 of 1901.

[4] C. O. 444/2, Moor to C. O., 1st Oct., 189[9] encl.—annual report. Niger Coast protectora[te] 1898–9.

[5] C. O. 520/12, Moor to C. O., 7th July, 19[01]

head who failed to discharge his duties was liable to similar punishment. Furthermore, where a House head convincingly ill-treated a member, 'the Court'—the district commissioner sitting alone or, at his discretion, with a native council of chiefs—might free such a member from all future obligations to a House.

This proclamation also provided for offences by employers, European or native, in respect of members of Houses. An employer, in this case, was required to obtain the prior consent of a House head. Failure to do this meant the infliction of the same punishment meted to members and House heads as shown above. The proclamation was also a vagrancy and poor law: any person caught 'wandering abroad or having no apparent means of subsistence' might be arrested, questioned and punished, 'unless he proves that he has sufficient means of subsistence, or that his want of such means is not the result of his own fault....'[1]

Critics of this proclamation saw it merely as a one-sided enactment which favoured House heads and did little for the members. An aspect of Moor's solution which so far has not been considered by writers on this subject is that this proclamation had its complement—a native trade tax arrangement—a *sine qua non* for enjoying the benefits allowed to a House head under the Native House Rule proclamation.[2]

Moor after various meetings with the chiefs of the coastal ethnic groups enjoined upon them the passing of a trade tax bye-law in their respective native councils. Its object was the reduction of the former 'topping' or 'workbar' of ten per cent to twenty-five per cent to a maximum of ten per cent. In some cases, it was as low as five per cent. This trade commission Moor allowed 'to enable' House heads 'to support their position and maintain their Houses in the manner required by native law and custom and approved by Government.'[3]

The labour problem Moor solved in another way: he amended the Master and Servant Proclamation, 1901, in 1903,[4] to cover government contracts, and enable the chiefs to obtain 'apprentices', persons under sixteen years of age, in place of 'bought' domestic slaves. The Master and Servant and Native House Rule Proclamations provided not only a transitional arrangement but also a compromise between slavery and free labour.

The operation of the Native House Rule Proclamation, which became an ordinance after the amalgamation of the protectorate of Southern Nigeria and the Colony and Protectorate of Lagos on 1st May, 1906, evoked much criticism. The main critics were the Lagos Press, missionaries inside and outside Nigeria, members of the British House of Commons, and the Anti-Slavery Society. One and all, they regarded this ordinance as a form of legalized slavery. Particularly in the Central Province, there were frequent desertions from Houses to the Western Province where this ordinance did not operate prior to and after the amalgamation of 1906. The prosecution and punishment of deserters led to much criticism.[5] Sometimes deserters, such as Jabez Linette (*alias* Sampson Odok *alias* Ekanem Esin) fled from Houses in the Eastern Province to the Spanish Island of Fernando Po.[6]

A further complaint which the Anti-Slavery Society brought against the ordinance, besides that of domestic slavery, was the alleged separation of families on the occurrence of deaths in Houses.[7] J. King, M.P. for

[1] C. O. 588/1, Proclamation No. 26 of 1901, Clause 8.

[2] C. O. 520/14, Moor to C. O., 24th April, 1902, encl. For the draft trade tax bye-law, *see* C. O. 520/12, Moor to C. O., 7th July, 1901, encl. 2.

[3] C. O. 520/14, Moor to C. O., 24th April, 1902, encl.

[4] C. O. 588/1, No. 12 of 1903.

[5] C. O. 520/40, T. Buxton to Elgin, 10th Oct., 1906 and encl.—*The Lagos Weekly Record*, 11th Aug., 1906.
C. O. 520/38, Egerton to Elgin, conf. 7th Dec., 1906.
C. O. 520/45, Egerton to Elgin, conf., 6th May, 1907.
C. O. 520/95, Thorburn to Crewe, conf., 15th Oct., 1910, and encl.
C. O. 520/99, J. H. Harris to Crewe, 20th Sept., 1910, and encl.
C.O. 520/110, T. Buxton to Harcourt, 11th Jan., 1911.
C.O. 520/108, J. King to Harcourt, private, 15th Feb., 1911, and encl.

[6] *Anti-Slavery Private Papers*, J. H. Harris to Anti-Slavery Society, 13th May, 1911; C. O. 520/110, T. Buxton to Harcourt, 26th June, 1911.
C. O. 520/114, F. S. James to Harcourt, conf., 28th April, 1912, and encl.

[7] C. O. 520/110, T. Buxton to C. O., 11th July, 1911.

Knutsford in the House of Commons, contended that persons married with Christian rites were separated on account of this ordinance.[1]

A conference of Anglican bishops and clergy in West Africa which met at Lagos in 1906 forwarded a resolution to Governor Egerton. The resolution complained of injury to individual and public morality in the Niger Delta because House heads forbade their members to contract marriages with persons from other Houses. It also urged Egerton's administration to give relief in such matters.[2] H. Tugwell, C.M.S. Bishop in Western Equatorial Africa (1894–1920), complained in April 1909 that the 'House System' checked, among other things, 'liberty to marry' except 'under grievous conditions.'[3]

The specific complaint of separation of persons married with Christian rites, as a result of this ordinance, was investigated by the district commissioners at Calabar, Aba, Bonny, Brass, Bende, Degema, Eket, Opobo, Owerri and Uyo. The Commissioner of the Eastern Province, for inexplicable reasons, considered these districts 'the most likely' from 'which such a report might emanate.'[4] The district commissioners, however, found no substance in the allegation.[5]

The operational problems of the Native House Rule Ordinance can be further ascertained from the reports received by Governor Egerton after carrying out an exhaustive local inquiry ordered by the Secretary of State for the Colonies (L. Harcourt) in a despatch of December 1910. Harcourt while admitting that the existing system had worked fairly well raised the question: 'Whether the time has not come for taking a more decisive step in the direction of a system of free labour.'[6]

The reports submitted by local officers showed that the administration of the ordinance had been 'lax' in the Central and Eastern Provinces. Secondly, these reports made it clear that the ordinance had been indiscriminately applied outside the coastal regions for which it was suitable. Thirdly, the local government realized that the ordinance had had but 'little effect' on the relative positions of the 'freeborn' and 'servile' members of Houses.[7]

As regards the lax administration of the ordinance in the Central and Eastern Provinces, Egerton gave five reasons. First, he attributed it to the special conditions of West African administration: a short-handed staff, constant transfers, leaves of absence and invalidings. Second, he blamed the indifference of the chiefs and House heads in reporting instances of desertion by members of Houses—an indifference he attributed to poor communications and the futility of complaints when made. A third reason was the employment of House members in government and commercial firms without an undertaking to give Houses about five per cent of salaries paid to such employees. The supposed influence of education in mission schools was another cause. Lastly, Egerton attributed it to the absence of a similar ordinance in the Western Province, the rendezvous of many deserters.[8]

To these factors one should add the breakdown of traditional authority generally. It is evident that the chiefs and House heads were unable, as British administrative control developed, to impose traditional sanctions against defaulting members. In olden days, a House head with the approval of the House council could sell a recalcitrant member, or impose other harsh punishments. As the number of runaways increased, and as they were powerless to prevent this, the House heads became reluctant to recruit apprentices. Hence, the Master and Servant Proclamations (later ordinances), Nos. 3 of 1901 and 12 of 1903, became a dead letter as regards apprentices. This last factor, however, was a manifestation, rather than a cause, of the impotence of House heads.

The various political and other officers who sent reports to Egerton on the working of the Native House Rule Ordinance gave conflicting accounts as to the suffering or otherwise of members of Houses under this legislation.[9] Of the various accounts in this connection, the views of Puisne Judge W. H. Stoker o

---

1 H. C. Deb. 5s. 21st, 13th, Feb. 1911, 671.

2 Cd. 4907, Lond., Appendix C, p. 446.

3 *Ibid.*, p. 446.

4 CSO 12/23/1, Provincial Commissioner, Calabar, to the Colonial Secretary, Lagos, conf., 15th April, 1911. This document was seen at the National Archives, Enugu.

5 *Ibid.*, and C. O. 520/102, Egerton to Harcourt, conf., 20th April, 1911, and encl.

6 C. O. 520/95, C. O. to Egerton, draft conf., 12th Dec., 1910.

7 C. O. 520/107, Egerton to Harcourt, conf 19th Oct., 1911, and minute by J. A.

8 *Ibid.*, main despatch.

9 *Ibid.*, enclosures.

30th March, 1911 appear to me to be the fairest and the best. Stoker observed:

'In many cases the existing system works hardship on members of houses. Instances have come to my notice in which clerks and others in the Government and other service (*sic*) have been summoned and . . . arrested at their places of duty and brought a considerable distance to answer charges . . . the neglect or disobedience being that they have not paid over (*sic*) proportion of their earnings to the head of their house or kept him posted of their whereabouts or complied with directions sent to them, sometimes after being away from their houses for many years. Members of house are looked upon as a source of Revenue (*sic*) by their heads. On the other hand, I have known instances of fines inflicted upon members of houses by courts paid for them by their head to save them from imprisonment—and in one instance a Native Court Clerk who was tried before me, at Arochuku Assizes and convicted, was defended by counsel employed by his head resident as far as Bonny, who also sent a member of the house to watch the case and give evidence on the accused's behalf if necessary.'[1]

Another important fact which emerged from the local inquiry was that instead of limiting the application of the ordinance to the coastal regions of the Niger Delta, British administrative officials extended it to the interior districts, where there was no discernible House system traditionally. The district commissioner at Idah reported, however, that the ordinance did not operate in his district.[2] The indiscriminate application of this ordinance resulted not from 'mistaken zeal'[3] of officers, contrary to the views of acting Colonial Secretary, F. S. James, in 1911, but from want of central direction.

At the same time, political officers used the ordinance for a variety of purposes: for example, public works and sanitation. W. Fosbery, Provincial Commissioner for the Eastern Province, convinced that the period of transition from domestic slavery to a system of free labour had not then (1911) ended, opposed its repeal. In his view, 'if so called (*sic*) free labour is to be instituted . . . then where are carriers to come from? How is the development of the Province to be continued by construction of roads, etc., etc.? . . . At the present time there is no difficulty in obtaining carriers, labourers, etc., in this Province and such work is willingly performed which is mainly due to the maintenance of the Native Authority under the House Rule Ordinance.'[4] This utilitarian aspect of the ordinance explains why British administrators were so enthusiastic, in the absence of any political memoranda to the contrary, in extending the application of the ordinance beyond the coastal regions of the Niger Delta.

The reports on the working of the Native House Rule Ordinance in the Central and Eastern Provinces convinced Harcourt, the Secretary of State for the Colonies, that the position in these provinces was 'little removed from slavery.'[5] The strong opinion which Harcourt expressed on this issue was a factor in the subsequent amendment of this ordinance in February 1912.

Even while the local inquiry was under way, the chiefs (almost invariably House heads) of Bonny, Opobo, New Calabar, Brass and Okrika, petitioned Egerton against a repeal of this ordinance.[6] Jekri chiefs in July 1911 protested against a repeal of the ordinance 'before another seven or ten years have elapsed.'[7] The Calabar chiefs, on the other hand, raised no objection to a repeal if adequate compensation were given to House heads. In their own case, the opening up of European 'factories' up the Cross River and its tributaries had stopped most of them from participation in trade as middlemen.[8] The protests of these chiefs failed, however, to stop an amendment of the ordinance, which made its subsequent repeal inevitable.

The amendment of the Native House Rule Ordinance was preceded by a vagrant ordinance[9] in November 1911, which provided for the punishment of 'idle and disorderly persons and rogues and vagabonds.' Three months after its enactment came the amendment[10] of the Native House Rule Ordinance, which enabled members to purchase their freedom from obligations to

---

1 *Ibid.*, encl. 1(*c*).
2 *Ibid.*, encl. 1: precis of reports.
3 *Ibid.*, encl. 1(*f*): F. S. James' memo., (n.d.).

4 *Ibid.*, encl. 1(*a*).
5 *Ibid.*, minute by L. Harcourt, 31/12/(1911).
6 *Ibid.*, encl. 1(*a*): Appendix D: petition dated 4th April, 1911.
7 *Ibid.*, encl. 1: petition dated 27th July, 1911.
8 *Ibid.*, encl. 1(*a*).
9 C. O. 588/3, No. 29 of 1911; amended by No. 13 of 1912 in C. O. 588/4.
10 C. O. 588/4, No. 1 of 1912, dated 8th Feb., 1912.

Houses. Payments, lump sums or instalments, were fixed; and paid (in the first instance) to district commissioners. The maximum fee for such freedom was £50, although a smaller amount—£15—was allowed for persons with lower incomes.[1]

Had A. G. Boyle, the acting Governor of Southern Nigeria during Egerton's absence, had his way in 1911, members of Houses would have contributed annually, either in cash or labour, to their House heads in place of their recognized obligations.[2] On the other hand, Provincial Commissioner Bedwell, Eastern Province, and acting Provincial Commissioner Copland-Crawford, Central Province, objected to such annual payment owing to difficulties in enforcement. These commissioners, however, favoured a single payment giving exemption from the liabilities as members of Houses.[3] Lugard, as would-be Governor of Northern and Southern Nigeria in May 1912, approved redemption money "in order primarily to prevent too rapid a dissolution of the House, and the consequent addition to the community of a large number of 'masterless-men' who may increase the criminal classes, and on the other hand, to save the heads of Houses from sudden disorganization."[4]

The amendment of the ordinance offered only a temporary panacea. It enabled a former member of a House to secure his freedom after paying redemption money outright or in instalments spread over a period not exceeding three years. After such payment, a member of a House would forfeit every privilege of membership of a House including that of part ownership of real and personal property, but could retain and remove all his own personal property.[5]

If, however, most able-bodied and prosperous members had a legal right to discontinue membership of their respective Houses, how then would the remaining old, infirm and poor ones have a chance of survival under changed circumstances? The amendment provided a legal means of securing one's freedom and independence without attempting to specify how others unable to purchase these benefits could gain from their past labours to their respective Houses.

The amendment was an indirect stab at the integrity of Houses by making splits in the existing Houses more frequent. Women, for instance, used this amendment to secure divorce from their respective husbands by obtaining 'freedom papers'.[6] Small wonder then, with such visible cracks in the edifice of Native House Rule, chiefs-*cum*-House heads used subtle means to prevent wholesale desertion of Houses by members. E. D. Simpson, acting Police Magistrate at Warri, reported in October 1912 that after freedom had been granted by the magistrate and a definite sum had been fixed and paid over between the parties, it was common practice for the chiefs to sue in the native courts persons seeking freedom for 'imaginary debts contracted while they were House Members.'[7]

It is clear that with the emergence of a new protector —the British Government and its police and law courts— the old *raison d'être* of the House system—survival through mutual co-operation—was lost. The spread of education, through mission and government enterprise, also undermined the solidarity of Houses by spreading ideas of individualism, liberty and independence. Furthermore, with improvements in land, river and marine transport, the British Government no longer depended, amongst other things, on 'canoe boys' for the development of commerce in the creeks of the Niger Delta.

Amidst the cumulative onslaught of such 'modern' forces, the repeal of the Native House Rule Ordinance could not much be postponed. First, by an order in council of 24th June, 1913,[8] the jurisdiction of native courts no longer extended and applied to the trial o[f] causes and matters under the Native House Rul[e] Ordinance. Then by Ordinance No. 15 of 1914, enacte[d] on 31st December, 1914,[9] the British Governme[nt] repealed the Native House Rule Ordinance with effe[ct] from 1st January, 1915.

---

1. *Ibid.*, clause 5.
2. C. O. 520/107, Egerton to Harcourt, conf., 19th Oct., 1911.
3. *Ibid.*
4. CSE/5/1/5866, minutes on 'House Rule' by Sir F. D. Lugard, 20th May, 1912.
5. *Ibid.*, Ordinance No. 1 of 1912, clause 5(*b*).
6. CSE/5/15850, F. D. Lugard to Harcourt, 19 March, 1913.
7. CSE/5/15866, E. D. Simpson's memo. on working of the Native House Rule ordina[nce] dated 30th Oct., 1912.
8. CSE/5/1/5866, Order No. 19 of 1913.
9. CSE/4/1/3945, The Native House Rule (Re[peal]) ordinance.

The Native House Rule Ordinance, before and after its repeal, did not strengthen, and could not have strengthened, the authority of the chiefs in the Central and Eastern Provinces, which had shown signs of weakening even before[1] it came into operation. The abuses which crept into its execution apart, the ordinance before its repeal in 1914 had the merit of limiting the volume of desertion from Houses to a trickle. It is difficult to estimate, as the import and export trade of Southern Nigeria expanded considerably between 1900 and 1914, how far this ordinance for over a decade retarded commerce by preventing or delaying free individual enterprise. By delaying the precipitate release of persons without an assured means of livelihood, the Native House Rule Ordinance contributed to the maintenance of law and order. In December 1964, the repeal of the Native House Rule Ordinance was half a century old. The House system, however, survives today in some of the coastal areas of the Niger Delta, but only as a shadow of its former self.

[1] C. O. 444/2, Moor to C. O., 1st Oct., 1899, encl.—annual report, Niger Coast protectorate, 1898–9.

THE BEGINNINGS OF THE WEST AFRICAN NOVEL

By

O. R. Dathorne

THE beginnings of West African fiction are to be found in two works by Ghanaians—one, R. E. Obeng's *Eighteenpence* (1943), is a novel and has the historical place of being the first West African novel in English. But before this E. Casely-Hayford had written *Ethiopia Unbound* in 1911. Together the two provide an interesting, although dissimilar, ancestor to the West African novel in English.

Kwamankra is the chief character of *Ethiopia Unbound*, and when the reader is first introduced to him, he is in London and converses with an English friend, Whiteley, a divinity student. Whiteley expresses doubts with regard to Christianity and Kwamankra's suggestion of 'our Lord born of an Ethiopian woman'. In this way, Kwamankra is given an opportunity to put forward his own beliefs on Christianity.

Abruptly Whiteley is dropped and the reader is introduced to Tandor-Kuma who has just finished his studies and finds that he cannot marry Ekuba, as she is only a maid. Then an abrupt shift in character and time takes the reader back to Kwamankra who is now in West Africa helping in the founding of a National University. Casely-Hayford devotes many pages to discussing the implications of such a university, arguing that 'no people could despise its own language, customs and institution and hope to avoid national death'.

The book is really concerned with expressing a hotch-potch of ideas. As far as action is concerned, little happens, and the book vacillates between fantasy and detailed documentation. Kwamankra is allowed to disappear from the story for long periods, and his place is either taken by other characters or else the author develops the ideas himself. Many of the ideas, however, lack clarity and are inconsistent. For instance, Kwamankra has to go to the United Kingdom when he wants to translate important books into his own

language for the founding of the national university. Furthermore, when the author is not attacking the evils of westernization, he is advocating the study of the Classics, or giving his action a classical setting, as with Kwamankra's visit to the underworld and the meeting of the nations of the world on Mount Atlas.

The same vacillation is observed in his attitude to class and Christianity. One character learns the lesson of social snobbery when he is nursed back to health by a woman he had despised, but at the Magistrate's party, Kwamankra advocates a meritocracy. There is, however, cohesion between Kwamankra's ideas and the author's; although it is not satisfactory art when they interchange roles, it is nevertheless worth pointing out, in a book with so many deficiencies, that their ideological world is a mutual one.

Kwamankra has little private life. His thoughts are all concerned with the public issues of his day. During the novel, one learns little about him as a person but a great deal about his attitude to various matters. As the author has said about him 'he had a call to duty, and that in the service of his race.' But his race is identified with any race that seems convenient at the moment in the argument; with Egyptians, Greeks, Ethiopians, Chinese, Japanese and West Indians. After a while his soul-searching enquiries about Christianity and his self-consciousness about race become a bore.

There are sudden inexplicable shifts in time, but there seems no accompanying change in the characters' growth. Kwamankra meets Whiteley at the beginning of the novel and then three years later, but one is not aware of any change in Kwamankra. The marriage to Mansa is skirted over very quickly; it is as if Caseley-Hayford feels that his book is one of ideas, reserving the greater part for the expression of these ideas.

Archaisms predominate—'twain', 'the wind blowing where it listeth', 'he wot not the full meaning of what he had done'—although they are appropriate in the description of the visit to the underworld. When Caseley-Hayford aspires to a back-to-nature romanticism, the writing becomes absurd and trite. He makes Mansa tell her husband:

> When we arrived (in England) the life of the people seemed to me artificial....Chance took me to Germany—there in the Black Forest, I got into direct touch with Nature; the song of the birds, the bleating of the lambs, the fragrance of the fields, all seemed so natural, and I said to myself; here is my proper place; here the atmosphere wherein my nature may expand.

These seem strange sentiments coming from Kwamankra's own wife, who, in the next breath, preaches world government by 'Ethiopians'.

Obeng-Akrofi, the chief character in E. E. Obeng's *Eighteenpence*, is more certain of his world. But although *Eighteenpence* is incontestably a novel, it has certain elements of *Ethiopia Unbound*; in particular a moral awareness, expressed at times in the language of the Bible, and a concern with documentation, in this case the legal system of the then Gold Coast.

Eighteenpence is really extended allegory: Akrofi, in order to repay a cutlass he has bought for eighteenpence to begin farming, agrees to work free for his creditor, the farmer, Owusu. But Konaduwa, Owusu's wife, falsely accuses him of attempting to rape her; then the account begins of a series of trials. Konaduwa is first tried for failing to report a case of rape and for abusing certain aristocrats. She refuses to be tried in the native courts, and leaves to report her case to the District Commissioner. On her way, a ferryman, who later marries her, falls in love with her, and when she is about to cross the ferry, her suitcase is knocked into the river. In annoyance, she insults a policeman and is once more brought to court.

She had previously accused her husband of employing slave-labour, and he is now tried for this. Then Akrofi's trial for attempted rape takes place, and also the trial of a girl who had insulted a sword-bearer. They are all let off quite leniently and the main interest of the author seems to be in detailing the formalities of court procedure. The rest of the novel is almost a new story dealing with how Akrofi marries and makes a success of farming by using European methods.

Akrofi is not a real person but a representative o commendable virtues. At times he is in danger c becoming a pious bore, especially when he lecture guests at a function to celebrate his son's governmer post, when he chastises a teacher for using corpor punishment at his school and when he bids farewell his daughters. A much more likeable and significa person in the novel is Konaduwa who is a rebellic figure, opposed to every type of authority. When refused to be tried in the native courts, and the wl

District Commissioner tries to dodge her by claiming that he was busy, she roundly upbraids him:

> If you have no time why do you say you will settle cases? You are not cultivating or trading for the Government, but you receive a good salary each month. Perhaps your pay is much higher than your father's is in your own country. You have nothing to do but sit in your office, come to Court and ask one or two questions, and go back to eat and sleep. Yet you get your pay.

But she is not anti-white, as Kwamankra tended to be; she is simply an angry individual, insulting the judges of the native courts as well by saying, 'Let me ask you this, or remind you, or awaken you, if you are sleeping'. When it suits her purpose she feigns contrition and is let off scot-free.

Unlike Caseley-Hayford's *Ethiopia Unbound*, there is an attempt at humour, although at times it is unintentional. For instance, when Konaduwa is asked to pay her fare to cross the ferry, she parts her lips in a smile, displaying a gap in her teeth. This wins over the ferryman;

> 'What exceptionally fine teeth this woman has!' the ferryman explained. 'Keep your sixpence,' he added, 'and I will pay it for you.'

At another point of the novel, the humour is evidently more intentional. Akrofi plays a gramophone given him as a present:

> The labourers had never heard one before, and when it began to play some ran away from the house .... In the morning the other labourers asked their master not to use the machine again; otherwise they would have to give notice.

J. B. Danquah has written of these novels:

> It is the first long novel in English ever published by a Gold Coast man. Caseley-Hayford's *Ethiopia Unbound*, which in a way, was an imaginative story, was political in motive. *Eighteenpence* is a true novel....

But both, while differing in artistic intention, remain important attempts in imaginative writing. It is true that Obeng's artistic intention might have been more evident than Caseley-Hayford's, but they both pioneered the way for an important development in West African fiction.

THE 1896 PROPOSED TRAINING COLLEGE*

By

DR NDUKA OKAFOR

FORMAL Education as carried out in any country has as one of its principal aims the preparation of that country's citizens for life in that country. Social conditions of course vary with time, and the preoccupation of education and educationists must change with changes in social conditions. In the latter decades of the nineteenth century, in 'British' West Africa, for instance, intense concern developed among the educated classes about what came to be called the 'Education Question'. A number of somewhat inter-related factors appear to have stimulated interest in the question.

The first of such factors was the 'spirit of race' or the 'principle of race' which was described as 'the desideratum of the hour.'[1] According to this principle, race did not conflict with the broader idea of the common brotherhood of man; it only demanded a recognition of race differences. In other words what was good education for one race was not necessarily so for another.

The Negro, therefore, demanded a different education from other races for his place in the order of

*This article is an abstract from a chapter of a book on University Development in Nigeria to be published by Longmans.

[1] *The Lagos Standard*. 20–5–1896.

things. And the education needed for this place according to the current view, then was undoubtedly the industrial type. This was enunciated very clearly in an editorial in the *Lagos Weekly Record* of 7th March, 1896:

> 'A child who is surrounded by a healthy environment of industrial activity as in Europe and America, needs the highest mental training to qualify him as a capable factor in the acutely keen competition of industrial activity in which he will have to contend.'[2]

On the other hand the surroundings of the African were just the reverse; in the African's case,

> indolence is imputed as a pronounced defect of his race, and his environment is in unmistakable agreement with the imputation....

It was evident that with such surroundings, the editorial continued, that the first care in the training of the African should be to counteract as much as possible the untoward influence of such surroundings and to make up for the inherent disposition to indolence.

According to what must appear to today's West Africans extremely strange reasoning 'the almost phenomenal progress of mental progress' of the American Negro was attributable to two factors in his history: first his subjection to industrial discipline as a slave, and secondly to the 'healthy environment of industrial activity' around him.

That industrial education was generally highly regarded becomes evident from even a cursory perusal of educational materials published at this time. Leading citizens eagerly associated themselves with schemes for Industrial Education. When for instance the Rev. Dr Mojola Agbebi,[3] well-known both in Lagos and in certain Negro circles in the United States, convened a meeting on 18th February, 1895, in Lagos in connection with founding the Colwyn Bay (Industrial) Institute those in attendance included such prominent figures as the Rev. W. B. Euba, Principal, Boys' High School; the Hon and Rev. James Johnson, M.A. (formerly of Freetown); Mr J. A. Otunba Payne, F. R. G. S., merchant and civil servant; C. A. Sapara-Williams, Esq., B.L., leading lawyer; Dr J. Randle, M.B., later leader of the first political party, Peoples' Union, and G. A. Williams, Esq., Editor of the *Lagos Standard*.[4] Indeed by 1895 the Congo Institute had already opened 'The Alfred Jones' Institute at New Calabar under the headship of the Rev. Dr Scholes.[5]

One on the 1st of February, 1896, another Colwyn Bay Industrial Mission was founded by the Rev. John E. Recketts at Agbowa in Ijebu Remo.[6]

The origin of the 'race principle' was the Negro of the United States of America where leaders such as Booker T. Washington publicized it.[7]

Another factor which led to a discussion of the education question was the growing dissatisfaction of the Lagos community with local youth trained in foreign institutions. Such youth were said to have copied the vices and not the virtues of the Europeans with whom they associated, and consequently became 'the laughing stock of foreigners and the ridicule of their fellow brethren.' They were said to be vandalistic, ostentatious, and their conduct presumptuous. One outspoken foreigner whose position and long contact with Africa entitled him to a hearing was the Governor of Lagos, Sir Gilbert Carter. From all accounts Carter was sympathetic to the local educational aspirations; he made strenuous efforts to raise the standard of the primary schools in Lagos. In an interview with the *African Review* summarized approvingly by *The Lagos Standard*, Governor Carter attacked the *foreign-educated* Negro, who, Carter said, was a failure both as regards himself as well as his people; he was filled with grotesque ideas; he spurned and looked down upon his former friends and acquaintances; he aped at the shadow whilst he eschewed the substance.[8]

In short then a demand not only that West African youth be trained in the industrial or practical arts, but that such training should be given in West Africa. It was in the heat of the discussion of the education question that the appointment of the veteran Dr Edward

---

[2] 'Industrial Training for the African Essential for His Development' *Lagos Weekly Record* 7–3–1896.

[3] See Akinsola Akinwowo: *The Place of Mojola Agbebi in the African Nationalist Movements:* 1890–1917 *Phylon* (Altlanta) 26 pp. 122—139, 1965.

[4] *The Lagos Standard* 20–2–1895.

[5] *The Lagos Standard* 3–7–1895.

[6] *The Lagos Standard* 29–4–1896.

[7] See Washington's Autobiography,-*Up from Slavery* New York, 1901.

[8] *The Lagos Standard* 17–7–1895; 31–7–1895.

[illegible] the leading natives of Lagos were willing to help the Government bear the initial financial burden, provided the matter was put before them in a practical form' and 'with a probability of its being sanctioned by the Secretary of State and becoming a part of government policy.' The leading natives according to Blyden were anxious to have the *means for the thorough training of their youth on the spot as it was an obvious peril for young men in the most critical years of their lives to be away from their own country.*

Replying, the Governor agreed that the practice of sending youth abroad was a mistaken one. He himself had incurred the displeasure of both Africans themselves and philanthropists in England ('whose knowledge of the African is usually theoretical rather than practical') for publicly saying so. He had thought for a long time that a thoroughly good Training Institution for Africans in Africa was the great educational need of the Race.

'There was no question that in general the young African educated in Europe imbibes ideas which make him dissatisfied with native environment and unfit him to live in it.'

The Governor then went into the importance of the industrial aspect of the scheme. Although praising the contribution of missionaries to education, he criticized them on two grounds: the first was that they laid too much on religious training, the main efforts being directed to training recruits for missionary work 'but this was not the most urgent need of Africa'. Secondly the missionaries introduced dogmatic Christianity as expounded by the many Christian sects—'a very equivocal blessing' which tended to confuse the simple African mind.

The young African did not [illegible] himself. Although skilled labour was in great demand in West Africa, manual labour was not popular with the young African who 'wants to be a minister, a lawyer, or a doctor, and failing these occupations, he condescends to be a clerk.'

It was not until he came to the question of financial assistance that Sir Gilbert hesitated: 'You will of course understand that any possible assistance which might be expected from the Government in support of such a scheme must be dependent upon the assured successful establishment of an institution such as you have in

mind.' The Government, he said, already contributed a liberal sum yearly in aid of education conducted by the missionary societies.

Blyden in his own reply hoped the Institution would attract Negro youth not in the West Coast but also from across the Atlantic. And then gave in the rest of this and most of the next letter what was the blue-print of the College.

The site of the College should be at Ebute Metta away from the town of Lagos and should be ample for industrial training and for 'practical illustrations of scientific teaching.' There would be two Departments: the Literary and the Industrial. The Industrial Section would include the 'usual mechanical trades,' as well as scientific and practical agriculture. Every student would devote a certain number of hours in each week to 'such industrial work, either mechanical or agricultural, as his taste may select and as will give the necessary physical training and mental dexterity.' The Literary Section would include 'such studies as would lead to acquisition of good intellectual habits and exercise.' From his many years' experience as a teacher, Blyden stated, what was learnt did not matter, once the student was grounded in reading and writing, and as long as he acquired the 'habits of spontaneous and continued attention, self-control and reflection.' These habits were *sine qua non* for African youth if they were to become capable and useful members of the Society. Christianity should be taught but should be undenominational and based on love of God and Man.

Governor Carter's reply was again sympathetic. While promising his personal support he would 'much like to see the idea zealously taken up and carried out by the more wealthy natives.' Nevertheless the Governor would not be won over to give or recommend financial aid. It is clear that even granting him sincerity in his utterances regarding the establishment of the proposed College, he was quite unwilling to commit the British Government to give any financial help.

He 'suggested' instead that the College be a 'National West African' one as he did not think that Lagos alone even with Government support could run such an institution. Before any buildings were put up, Carter suggested, an endowment large enough for minimum staff of four should be available from the start. As for the land at Ebute Metta, he could promise nothing as the Botanic Garden impinged on land in which the Railway was being constructed.

As the matter stood, the ball was clearly in the court of the Lagos gentlemen. Blyden had convened a meeting of these gentlemen on the 27th of May, 1896 and from their number, they had elected a Committee which then proceeded to draft a prospectus. The prospectus summarized the points about the Institute as described in the Blyden-Carter Correspondence; but it also included other features, such as fixing a date-line for the contributions:

> If the sum of £1,000 be not secured before the end of the year, that is before 31st December, 1896, and if there appear to be no reasonable prospects of raising the said amount so as to allow a beginning to be made on the buildings in the early part of 1897, with an assurance of completion, the monies contributed will be returned to the contributors—not one penny of which will be used for any preliminary expenses.[11]

Founders, according to the prospectus, would be considered to be those who contributed £5 or more before the erection of buildings; they would also qualify to vote at meetings and may be elected to the Board of Trustees.

The proposal of the Training College was hailed enthusiastically in newspapers. It was hoped that when completed the College would serve as a training ground for the future self-government of the Colony and its Protectorate.

It was the answer to the 'education of the people,' around which clustered all 'the ills that our political, religious and domestic life is heir to.'[12]

Indeed feelings expressed at the time gave the impression that the Lagos Training College was like a raft thrown to help a drowning man just when he had lost all hope of survival.

On paper the College was ready; the money was however still to come and when the Prospectus was published there were about six more months to reach the date-line. Every method of public persuasion appeared to have been used; the very setting of a date-line itself was calculated to give the scheme a practic

---

11 Quoted in *The Lagos Standard* 1–7–1896.
12 ibid.

the Governor to give the scheme as much support as possible, including financial assistance, provided it was ascertained beyond doubt that the natives were serious about their desire for such an institution. Did the Governor and later the Secretary of State impose the condition of the subscription of the Africans only because they were aware that the Africans would not reach even their own earmarked figure? To see Carter's role in a wider perspective two factors need to be noted about his attitude with regards to the financial aspects of the proposed scheme. The first was that he did not at any time say how much he thought the Africans ought to contribute to qualify for Government aid. Whether or not this militated against the attainment of the target of £1,000 is difficult to say, but a stated contribution might have acted as an incentive. The second factor was that the Governor consistently rated the scheme more expensive than the Africans themselves thought. For instance where the Africans thought scholarships should be worth £25 per annum the Governor thought it would be £30. Was this due to a more realistic approach, or was it an attempt to dampen enthusiasm in the scheme? The constitution of the proposed College placed power squarely in the hands of the Africans, although care was taken not to alienate European and, therefore, Government interest. The Governor himself was, for instance, to be the President *ex-officio* of the College and three of the fifteen members of the council were to be Europeans. It would have been surprising if the Government had invested money in a scheme in which it had next to no control. This is an added reason for doubting the sincerity of the Governor's support for the plan.

What sort of institution was the paper model of the Lagos Training College and Industrial Institute? The general similarity of the organization of the proposed Industrial Institute to that of a university and the mention of 'professors' leave no doubt that a type of university institution was envisaged. Yet there were features which would make it different from what we call universities today. First no mention of the name 'university' was made in all the discussions about the institute either in the Press or in the Blyden–Carter correspondence. Secondly Blyden himself says that Higher Mathematics would not be taught. Nevertheless subjects such as Mineralogy, Botany and Geology

studied today in universities were to have been studied in the Institute. The proposed Lagos Training College was, therefore, at worst, a high-powered secondary school and at best, a highly vocational university, an archetype of the Land-grant College of the United States.

FORTY YEARS BACK

By
A. K. Metteden

In the December, 1966 issue of *Nigeria* Magazine a contributor had occasion to remind us[1] that we started humbly as *The Nigerian Teacher* in 1933. But, looking up the maiden issue of the Magazine, we find that our history, in fact, goes back to 1927 which makes us exactly forty this year!

And as in a much earlier article in our issue No. 43 of 1954, Mr Vivian Renwick had written already on 'Forty Years On', we may as well call this sequel 'Forty Years Back', so to speak.

The first paragraph of the Foreword to the maiden issue reads:

> "The Bulletin of Educational Matters" was started in February, 1927, under the guiding hand of Mr E. R. Swanston, who during his short time did so much in so many ways for the cause of education in Southern Nigeria.'

But, the Foreword goes on to say: 'In order to indicate more clearly the true purpose of the journal, it is proposed to change its name to "The Nigerian Teacher". It was published by the Education Department, Lagos, at 6*d* and was then half-yearly.

The Foreword was modest enough to refrain from mentioning those contributors *from* the Education Department itself but said: 'Mr J. R. Ainslie, Director of Forestry, writes on forests and forest reserves; Lieut.-Commander G. W. Trinick, of the Marine Department, surveys the intricate study of tides, and Dr A. K. Brown, Medical Officer in-charge of the Leper Colony in Uzuakoli, describes the function of a leper colony.'

The remaining contributors to the maiden issue, which ran to forty pages and carried neither advertisements nor Book Reviews, were—S. Milburn; A. J. C. (Carpenter—*Ed.*); J. D. C. (Clarke—*Ed.*); A. Hunt-Cooke; E. L. Mort; A. John; G. Barnett and the Editor himself—howbeit anonymously.

[1] pp. 300 and 303.

How many copies of the first edition were printed and sold was told us in the Editorial to No. 2 of 1934 where we read: 'The journal was sold at cost price. Two thousand copies of No. 1 were printed and nearly every one was quickly sold. The reception of the journal was so satisfactory that three thousand copies of No. 2 are being printed.'

Other points of information in that Editorial read: 'Nigeria contains over 10,000 Registered Teachers.' 'In this issue we welcome to our pages four African contributors' and, for the information of those of our readers who may like to know who those first African contributors were, they are: Tomori Aribisala of the Kudeti C.M.S. Girls' School, Ibadan, who wrote on 'Yoruba Cookery In A Girls' School'; P. V. N. Ezekwe, a then student of the Higher College, Yaba who described 'Native Art and Industry In Awka'; E. A. Ukong Ibekwe who had something to say 'On The Teaching of Vernacular Languages' and the late Charles Ndaguba, Headmaster of the R.C.M. School, Emekuku, Owerri who told us about 'Experimental Work In Schools'.

With African teachers lending a hand, No. 2 swelled to 64 pages (at 6*d* still) and contained both advertisements and Book Reviews. The books reviewed included those written by F. M. Urling-Smith, T. R. Batten and (the first Editor) E. H. Duckworth.

An article of special interest to Nigerian readers coming from a pen in London is contained in Nos. 3 of 1934 and 4 of 1935. In the Editorial to the former we are introduced to these articles thus—'In this number Dr I. C. Ward, of London University, contributes an article on English in Nigeria.

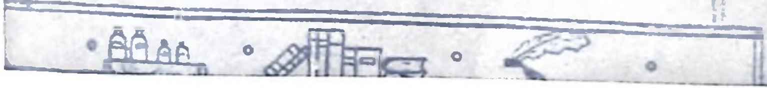
'Last year many teachers in Nigeria were deepl[y] interested by her lectures. A second article by Dr War[d] will appear in No. 4 of *The Nigerian Teacher*.'

Another lady contributor (from Northern Nigeri[a]

Vol. 1. No. 1. 1933 Price 6d.

CONTENTS

	Page
Foreword	1
Yoruba Schools and Yoruba Life— "A Plea for Museums"	2
Nature Study—An opportunity for original work ...	7
Forests and Forest Reserves	10
The House Comb Wasp	14
On Behalf of Caged Birds	15
School Farm Plots	17
The Bluebottle	21
Toro Elementary Training Centre	23
Leprosy	26
A Nigerian Industry	29
The Ant-Lion	31
Two Experiments on Dwellers in the Soil	33
Tides	34
Occasional Notes	40



was Miss E. S. Fegan who writes—a favourite theme with her—'On the Making of Books'.

Of special interest in that number (as appearing for the first time) are two quotations. The first from Marcus Aurelius and the second from the Arabs. Here they are:

'Think not so much of what thou hast not as of what thou hast; but of the things thou hast, select the best, and then reflect how eagerly they would have been sought if thou hadst them not.'

'He that knows not and knows not that he knows not, is a fool; shun him.
He that knows and knows not that he knows, is asleep; arouse him.
He that knows not and knows that he knows not, is simple; teach him.
He that knows and knows that he knows, is a wise man; follow him.'

The readership had hitherto apparently been confined to those in Nigeria for the Editorial to number 4 of 1935 informs us: 'Orders for the journal have been received from England, the Sudan, South Africa, Australia and America.' This widening of readership makes the Editor optimistic enough to say: 'We are most anxious to increase the sales to at least 5,000 copies an issue' and more optimistic still to reaffirm: 'In future we hope to publish *The Nigerian Teacher* every quarter. Frequent and regular publication requires a good stream of contributions.'

By way of variety and as an invitation for articles on crafts the Editor says: 'We would specifically welcome articles from our readers on craft work, and would be pleased to receive correspondence and suggestions.'

A specialist Editorial Board consisted of:

'N.A. Birtwistle, Esq., Igbobi College, Lagos—for

Mr E. L. Mort (third from left) who wrote on 'Toro Elementary Training Centre' in No. 1 *of* THE NIGERIAN TEACHER, *retired in* 1945 *as the Principal of Kaduna College is seen here with the other members of the staff of that College. On his right are Alhaji Bello Kagara, the Head Teacher (the recently retired Wali of Katsina); Mr W. S. de G. Rankin (the author of the famous* Detailed English Course*); Professor (Dr) Ronald Miller (now of the Department of Geography, Glasgow University), and Mr J. M. Beckley (now a Permanent Secretary in Ibadan).*

the preparation of drawings in a form suitable for publication.

A. J. Carpenter, Esq., King's College, Lagos—Nature Study.

F. D. Golding, Esq., c/o Agricultural Department, Ibadan—Agriculture and Economic Entomology.

B. J. C. Hammerton, Esq., King's College, Lagos—English.

W. D. MacGregor, Esq., c/o Forestry Department, Ibadan—Forestry.

S. Milburn, Esq., c/o Education Department, Lagos—Anthropology and Antiquities.

Miss G. Plummer, c/o Education Office, Ibadan—Domestic Subjects.

V. B. V. Powell, Esq., Government College, Ibadan—Sports and Athletics.'

As a special reminder to readers the Editor concludes: 'We remind our readers that back numbers of *The Nigerian Teacher* can be obtained at 6*d* each.'

Finally, a contributor to that number who has just recently retired from the Civil Service of Nigeria is Mr K. C. Murray (the former Director, Antiquities Department, Lagos) who wrote on 'Body Paintings From Umuahia'.

Also, in an unsigned article on 'The Higher College, Yaba' we learn, that: 'The Higher College, Yaba was opened on 19th January 1934, by His Excellency Sir Donald Cameron, G.C.M.G., K.B.E.'

For the first time here we are told who the publishers were. An imprint on the Editorial Page of No. 4 says: 'Published for the Education Department, Nigeria, by West African Publicity Limited, London and Lagos.'

By way of quotations, we read the following anonymous one: *'Money will buy practically everything except a few little details like health, happiness and self-respect.'*

Hitherto, contributions had come only from British and/or Southern Nigerian writers. The first to come from the North came, not surprisingly enough, from the late (then) Mallam Abubakar Tafawa Balewa who later rose to be the first Prime Minister of Nigeria. He wrote on 'The City of Language'.

This number ran to seventy-four pages but was still sold for 6*d* a copy. The Editorial to number 5 of 1935 is of special interest in two respects. The first is:

'Message of His Excellency Sir Donald Cameron, G.C.M.G., K.B.E., Governor and Commander-in-Chief, to the African Members of the Teaching Profession, before His departure from Nigeria on Retirement, written in June, 1935.

Secondly, quoting a letter from Mr Molokwu, of the Government School, Irrua, who says:

'The thirty-eight copies of No. 4 which I received did not keep for even a week because of the posters and circulars. I made a special notice board and fixed the poster and sent the circular to distant schools. In about three days my thirty-eight copies were finished, so I sent a special runner to Benin City for twenty copies and only four remain with me to date.'—

the Editor appeals to readers in the following terms: 'We welcome this suggestion, and invite our readers to let us know of any special articles they would like included in *The Nigerian Teacher*.'

The first contribution to what we now call the 'Readers' Letters' page in our Magazine came out under the heading 'Correspondence' in the same No. 5 of 1935 and the subject-matter was:

'Dear Sir,

May I say how much I welcome the two articles on the Vernacular in your No. 4 issue of *The Nigerian Teacher*, Mr East showing what is being done in the North to encourage a love of reading, and Mr Ubong-Ibekwe voicing the discontent which is felt by what appears to be a growing number of educated Africans at the neglect of the study of the Vernacular.

While there is little doubt that English will become the *lingua franca* of Nigeria, at any rate in the South, this does not mean that the native languages should be relegated to a position of no importance. Indeed, an education in the Vernacular in the Elementary stages, with regular lessons in reading and composition in the Mother Tongue throughout the school is the best foundation for the instruction in English which must form part of the curriculum. It could be made to provide a valuable discipline and training.

I am, Sir,

Yours faithfully,

Ida C. Ward'

A change of volume occurs with No. 6 of 1936 and in the Editorial to that issue the Editor has 'great pleasure in welcoming to our pages a large number of African contributors. We look forward to an ever-increasing number of such contributors; at the same time we hope all readers will continue to help by

making the journal known to their friends. We aim at a *minimum* circulation of 6,000 copies, with pictures on every page.'

A contribution from outside Nigeria in this issue comes from Mr W. E. Ward of Achimota who writes on 'A Garden Pool'. Within Nigeria and from a similar institution Mr (now Chief) Michael E. Okorododu writes on 'Life at the Yaba Higher College.'

For variety and by way of quotations we read in the same issue: '*Work in every hour, paid or unpaid; see only that thou workest, and thou canst not escape the reward.... The reward of a thing well done is to have done it.*' (EMERSON)

'*Try to do your duty, and you will find what you are fit for. But what is your duty? The demand of the hour.*' (GOETHE)

Also in that issue we have 'Some Maxims' which, as they may be useful to all of us, we beg to reproduce:

'*Have a purpose. A worthy purpose will speedily free the mind and spirit from mumps and measles, dyspepsia and layout.*

'*Do not long for fame, but seek only to deserve it. What if a few thousand know your name. There are sixteen hundred million persons in the world.*

'*Virtue and honesty do not always lead to soft beds and gilded chambers.*' VICTOR HUGO

'*A good conscience is the partner of peace.*
No friend is so true as the friend who is willing to lose your friendship by warning you.'

A Knight on the Goshawk

I always maintain that great men have some oddities of getting themselves interested in little things which the little men regard as *infra dig* of them to take notice of! No less a personality than Sir DONALD KINGDOM writing on THE NORTH AFRICAN CHANTING GOSHAWK provides us a good example of what some may regard as an eccentricity.

While the celebrations lasted, 'Empire Day At Okene' was also described to us in this issue by Mallam Isa Koton-Karifi (now one of Nigeria's Ambassadors abroad). With the influx of more articles and writers the pages of No. 6 are increased to seventy-eight with no change in the selling price. Considering that our pages still rotate at around eighty while each copy sells for 2*s*, ours is a remarkable achievement.

'THE NIGERIAN TEACHER shows steady growth', says the Editorial to No. 7 of 1936, 'and, as the journal becomes known, it is being more and more widely read by Africans and Europeans.

'For some time past we have felt that the title does not fully describe the scope of the journal; we endeavour to print articles that are of interest and value not only to teachers, but to all educated men and women....

'We, therefore, propose making a slight change in the title to indicate, more fully, the scope of the journal.

'Two suggestions are the name should be *The Nigerian* or *The Nigerian World*, but before making any alteration we welcome the help of our readers in the selection of a suitable name. Readers' suggestions should be sent to the Editor.

'If the name be modified we propose introducing it with the publication of No. 8.

'We intend numbering the journal consecutively 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 and onwards and omitting the volume number.'

The second page of No. 7 of 1936 contains the following:

'A FAREWELL LETTER TO NIGERIAN TEACHERS
From Mr E. R. J. HUSSEY,
Director of Education.
29-2-36.

* * *

'To keep himself from becoming stale a teacher should always continue his own education. This can be done by regular reading both of books and educational Journals, such as *The Nigerian Teacher*, and by doing some original work in such subjects as nature study, local history, and arts and crafts. I would recommend teachers to devote sometime everyday to improving their own education in these ways....

'I often wonder what Nigeria will be like in ten, twenty, thirty, forty years time. Personally, I believe that Nigerians are going to respond nobly to the greater responsibilities which they must shoulder both inside and outside of Government service. You teachers have the important task of training such men and women. It may be that many of you will find your former pupils rising to posts of importance and responsibility while you remain relatively humble dominies. That is the way wi

the teaching profession all over the world.... You may, however, derive no little consolation from the reflection that you have, in a larger measure than most other people, opportunities of doing service to your fellow-men, and it is in doing things for other people that the greatest satisfaction and happiness is to be found.'

Lake Chad, which has been the subject of many articles by different authors was first described by Mr R. E. Ellison in this issue.

No. 8 still retains the original title because the editorial board 'overlooked the fact that the printer would require the copy of No. 8 issue before our readers would have time to express their views.'

There were 'so many demands for recent issues of the journal that the printers were asked to produce, 4,000 copies of No. 7, but with our readers' help we confidently look forward to the time when it will be necessary to ask for 8,000 copies or more'.

It is in the editorial to this number that we learn. 'All writers, artists and photographers give their services free, and the bookshops and stores sell *The Nigerian Teacher* without taking commission.'

'Stone Sculptures at Esie' (Ilorin Province)—which are still being described by different writers—was first described by S. MILBURN in No. 8 of 1936.

SPECIAL ISSUES

IN April, 1936 came out the Coronation Issue which ran to 104 pages, sold for 9*d* a copy and carried an article 'Lagos to London by Imperial Airways' by Sir Bernard Bourdillon, Governor of Nigeria. In the Editorial to the next issue (No. 11) of July, we are told that as many as 10,000 copies of the Coronation Issue were printed. In this issue also the then Oba of Benin corrects an historical error made in the Coronation Issue.

In number 12 of 1937, Aderemi, the Oni of Ife writes on 'Notes on the City of Ife'—about which the Editor says: 'The Oni takes a very great interest in the beautiful works of art that exist in and around his city, and we are happy to learn that the Ife Native Administration

E. R. J. Hussey, C.M.G., Director of Education, Nigeria, 1929–[illegible]

has recently voted a sum of money for the building of a museum.

'We hope other Native Administrations will see their way to establishing museums for the preservation of antiquities and for the exhibition of good specimens of present-day art and craft work.'

Number 13 of 1938 is of special interest in that the majority of the writers therein are Nigerians some of whom have since risen to eminence. They include names like R. A. Njoku; A. E. Howson-Wright and Mallams Ahmadu Waziri (now an Ambassador) and Othman Ja'afur.

ARTS AND CRAFTS

In the editorial to number 14 of 1938 the Editor tells us—'This issue of *Nigeria* has been produced in association with the Nigerian Arts and Crafts Exhibits sent to the Empire Exhibition at Glasgow....With such a wealth of picture material available we could not resist the temptation to make number 14 issue of the magazine an arts and crafts number.'

Number 15 of 1938, which contains articles on 'Some Provinces of Nigeria' (Ilorin, Kano, Plateau, the Emirate of Zazzau and Ijebu) by their respective Residents (except the one on Kano which was written by T. H. Baldwin of the Education Department), has an Introduction written by Sir Bernard Bourdillon, Governor and Commander-in-Chief, Nigeria, who tells us:

> 'In this number of *Nigeria* there begins a very valuable series of articles on the different Provinces of Nigeria, which, together with the other articles of special travel interest, should prove of the greatest interest to non-African readers.
>
> 'Nigeria, in point of population, is, with the exception of India and the United Kingdom itself, by far the largest unit in the British Empire, and yet the ignorance which persists in regard to it in England, except among those who make a special study of African Affairs, is amazing.'

SCOUTING AND POLICE

Of special interest to Scouts and members of the Nigeria Police Force are two articles in number 16 of 1938: The one on 'Scouting in Nigeria' written by the first Chief Scout Commissioner in Nigeria (Arthur Brown) and the other 'The Nigeria Police Force as a Career' written by the then Acting Commissioner of Police (W. C. C. King).

NATIONAL MUSEUM

In the Editorial to number 18 of 1939 we read:

'Many of our readers are interested in the preservation of our old treasures and the provision of museums. We are happy to report that there is a possibility of obtaining financial help from a certain outside source for the founding of a National Museum. If this help is forthcoming, we have little doubt that the Government of Nigeria, the big trading firms and many private individuals will contribute their quota.'

TRANS-SAHARA BY CAR

In number 19 of 1939, R. F. Hogarth, who made the journey, tells us:

> 'From Umuahia to London overland is 4,213 miles, which we covered in 19 days, an average of about 220 miles a day—a steady pace in a ford V8 Kit-carrier....'

SPECIAL WAR ISSUE

A break in the production of the magazine occurred between numbers 21 of 1940 and 22 of 1944 and in an Editorial to the latter the Editor writes:

> 'The appearance of this issue of our Magazine has been delayed for many months—actually for more than a year—through a combination of causes arising out of war conditions....
>
> 'This issue of *Nigeria* is a Special War Issue and will thus have permanent value and significance as a chronicle, however incomplete, of Nigeria's contribution to the effort of the United Nations at this memorable period of world history. And the first article, therefore, is on "Some Aspects of Military Life" in pictures.'

In the same issue in three paragraphs and three photographs we are introduced to 'The Scout Movement in the Northern Provinces' where we are told that '. . . the Kano City Scout Troop . . . is the very first Scout Troop of Northern Provinces . . .' and that 'As this was the first troop to be formed in Kano City the Emir allowed it to use his name; thus it is known as the "Emir of Kano's Own" Troop.'

And the first Northern Scoutmaster who appears

one of the photographs is 'Mallam Wada' who later rose to be a Federal Minister in the First Republic.

FIRST EXHIBITION

We are told about 'Nigeria's First Exhibition of Antiquities' in number 26 of 1947 where K. C. Murray, the then Surveyor of Antiquities, tells us:

'The first public exhibition of its antiquities to be held in Nigeria was opened in Lagos on 7th December 1946, at the Exhibition Centre which is part of the organization of the magazine *Nigeria*.'

Talking of antiquities, number 29 of 1948 contains an article by the Emir of Katsina describing the historical 'Gobarau Minaret, Katsina'—now one of our antiquities acquisition.

THE BADGE OF NIGERIA

In Number 30 of 1949 we read:

'The following is an extract from a letter written on 3rd April, 1940, by the late Lord Lugard.

'The design of the interlaced triangles is I think commonly called Solomon's Seal.' I do not know if and when it was adopted as the Seal of Islam, but it was found on the lid of a very handsome goblet or jug of brass and copper covered with designs and with the serpent's head as a mouthpiece, which was captured by the troops when the Emir of Kontagora, the principal slave-raider in Northern Nigeria, and as far as I can remember it was my own suggestion. On amalgamation of North and South it was adopted as the emblem of united Nigeria. The despatch recommending it to the Secretary of State must be in the archives of the Nigerian Secretariat.'

GIRL GUIDES

In an article 'Guiding in Nigeria' in number 32 of 1949 we are told, among other things in its history, that:

'1919—The first Guide Company in Nigeria was formed in the Methodist Girls' School, Lagos.'

FOUNDER RETIRES

In the Editorial to number 41 of 1953 we read:

'Alas, when this number of *Nigeria* Magazine comes out, Ducky will have gone.

'Edward Harland Duckworth has been the Editor since the mid-thirties when, as *The Nigerian Teacher*, the magazine made its first tentative steps. It is his work. It has always been the means through which this usually undemonstrative man expresses his love of the people of this country. No one will ever know the full measure of his good works'.

SPECIAL INDEPENDENCE ISSUE

Number 66 of October, 1960 was a Special Independence Issue which ran to 224 pages and 'had an unprecedented success,' in that 'over 40,000 copies of it were sold' by December of that year when it had run into a third edition!

In the Introduction to that Special Number, the Editor—Michael Crowder—writes:

'SIXTY YEARS AGO the Editorial correspondent of *The Times*, Flora Shaw, who later became wife of Lugard, suggested the name Nigeria for the territories around the Niger over which Britain had established a Protectorate. In 1900, Britain took over control of the Colony of Lagos, the Niger Coast Protectorate, the Royal Niger Company's Protectorate, which in theory extended as far as Katsina and Bornu, and called the new territory *Nigeria*, which they divided into North and South.'

The number sold for the same price 2*s* (Overseas 4*s* including postage). This popular number is now out of stock but its French Edition—published in March, 1962—running to 190 pages and entitled *Le Nigeria Independant* is still in stock selling at 7*s*–6*d*: in fact, we have as many as 2,400 copies of this edition unsold.

(LAGOS) CENTENARY SUPPLEMENT

Issue No. 69 of August 1961 was 'A Special Centenary Supplement edited by Onuora Nzekwu'—our first Nigerian Editor—who fully assumed Editorial duties with the Crafts Issue—number 74 (Vol. XXX) of September, 1962.

Briefly stated other points of interest in the back history of the Magazine are:

Editorially from numbers 1 of 1933 to 41 of 1953 were edited by the founder, Mr E. H. Duckworth; Nos. 42 of the same year to 63 of 1959 were edited by Mr D. W. MacRow; Nos. 64 of 1960 to 73 of June, 1962 were under the Editorship of Michael Crowder and numbers 74 (Vol. XXX) of September of that year to 90 of September, 1966 were edited by the first Nigerian Editor, Onuora Nzekwu.

From the selling price point of view, numbers 1 to

22 of 1944 (except the Coronation Issue—No. 10 of April, 1937 which sold for 9*d*) sold at 6*d* a copy; number 36 of 1951—'owing to a very large advance in the cost of paper'—was obliged to sell at 1*s*–6*d* and from numbers 37 of that year to date the price has remained at 2*s* a copy.

And by way of invitations to cover assignments abroad, Editor E. H. Duckworth had this to say in 1953:

'My telephone bell rang; it was a senior official of the West African Airways speaking. There was a vacant seat on the next plane leaving for Khartoum. Would I care to accept it for the purpose of taking photographs to illustrate at least part of the air journey that has now become so popular with Nigerians going on a pilgrimage to Mecca *via* the Sudan? I seized the opportunity... it was February 28th....'

Similarly in May 1962, the present writer was invited by telephone by the Saudi Arabian Embassy in Lagos to join a group of four other Nigerian journalists invited by them to make the pilgrimage and see something about that country generally. It is over there considered indecorous to take photographs of the holy places (even if allowed) during the Haj performances. But one of us managed to snap some of the journalists pictured below.

Finally, amongst our eminent Nigerian contributors we are proud to name also the late Herbert Macaulay, Dr Kenneth O. Dike, Dr T. O. Elias, the Timi of Ede, the Emir of Katsina, Chief M. E. R. Okorodudu and the Emir of Kano. We hope that our admirers, contributors and readers all over the world will continue to make the *Nigeria* Magazine as informative, authoritative, interesting and entertaining as it has hitherto been.

And to our publishers, The Nigerian National Press, Malu Road, Apapa, who succeeded Messrs. A. Brown & Sons Limited, of Hull, England as our printers since the issue (No. 72) of March, 1962 and the Education Department which founded us, we say thank you!

(Left to right) Our Assistant Editor; Alhajis Lateef Olayinka; Sulaiman and Lateef Teniola standing on the balcony of the Broadcasting Station at Mina, Saudi Arabia. In the background can be seen a mass of pilgrims gathered to throw their pieces of stones at the smallest of the three 'devils' near the Broadcasting Station.

BOOKS

Ballad of a Marriage *by* JAMES SIMMONS *Festival Publications, Queen's University of Belfast,* 1966, *2s–6d.*

THE above modest collection of poems by a practising English (to be more precise, Irish,) poet, who is a lecturer in English in Northern Nigeria, is of considerable interest to those who puzzle about the diminished status of Poetry among the arts in western countries; and who wonder why it has lost the popular touch and the popular appeal it still has for example in Nigeria, especially in the North. Mr Simmons' poems are to some extent in ballad form and seem to suggest a reaching-out towards the common man, and indeed Mr Simmons' own performance of them on various occasions, in person and over the radio, indicates that they are not without certain kinds of ready appeal to quite unsophisticated and untrained listeners.

Many poets, from Auden (obviously a strongly determining influence on Mr Simmons' verse) onwards, have been disturbed by the gap between the poet and the public, and adopted supposedly 'popular' forms with a view to reaching the widest possible audience. Not from any wish to emulate the fortune made by some modern 'mass entertainers,' but rather I suppose from a sense of injured professional pride allied with an element of guilty conscience at 'giving up to party what was meant for mankind,' which makes them feel that a poet in the modern world surely *ought* to be able to reach out and influence people's minds and feelings as in former ages.

However it takes something more than the adoption of a 'form' to arouse a devotion to any art and I suppose the fact remains that most modern poetry from English-speaking countries, in spite of various concessions towards popularity, remains esoteric and difficult of access. For this no doubt we should blame the Age. Amid the beguiling and insidious voices of the propagandists, political and commercial, enticing us to the easy pleasures of sense and spirit—(Go on, spoil yourself!); against the blaring wail and hypnotic beat of the strongly amplified music which deluges us on the ether from morning to night, what chance has the still small voice of the poetic muse? Perhaps, we may reflect, we can expect no more in an age of vulgarising and vulgarity than that poetry should strive modestly to keep alive the integrity of the human spirit—to keep, in Ezra Pound's phrase, 'the tools of language clean,' so that after the deluge has subsided there will remain little pockets of survival where genuine human feeling has been preserved and from which human life can blossom once more.

If we can accept this cataclysmic picture, it is of course essential that poetry should preserve absolutely genuine and vital integrity of feeling and apprehension. But this, of course, has always been one of the greater difficulties for poets and for Poetry. Just as religion has often been so powerful and appealing a force that enthusiasts have embraced it with such haste as to become *religiose* rather than religious; so, many hopeful poets have fallen short of the goal and become no more than poetical persons or poetical writers. The fate of poetry, itself one of the highest forms of literature, has only too often been to become literary.

> And then, for lack of energy
> We join the rest

writes Mr Simmons—albeit on a different topic!—in *A Good Thing,* with that engaging and utter frankness which is probably one of his characteristic merits as a writer.

There are of course as many different ways of being literary as there are types of literature; the ways of being poetical which were tempting to Spenser, to Milton, to Pope, to Gray, to Keats, to Tennyson, to Bridges, are hardly likely to be influential in the sensibility of a mid-twentieth century poet. And surely enough the literary influences which loom up in the background of Mr Simmons' poems are much more modern and fashionable. Auden we have already

mentioned, and his dry, precise voice seems to be speaking through Mr Simmons at many moments: though perhaps *My Hero* is the poem most strongly derived—from *A Shilling Life*; *A Good Thing* seems to owe a good deal to Hardy's *Great Things;* whilst *Lust* is perhaps a more explicit expansion of *After the Club Dance. What is the Stars,* I think picks up from a key phrase in one of O'Casey's plays, and there is a considerable echo of Yeats at a number of points: compare Mr Simmons'

Please
go easy past my heart (*Lust*)

with Yeats'

Tread softly
For you tread on my dreams

or his

Aedh wishes for the Cloths of Heaven

Her face drained white in love's despair
(*Ballad of a Marriage*)

with Yeats'

Rhymed out in love's despair
(—*The Scholars*)

It would not be surprising if T. S. Eliot proved to be a major influence. Eliot himself has pointed out how the great monolithic influence of Milton and Dryden lay across the poetry of succeeding generations, producing the famous dissociation of sensibility; and has had a similar effect himself on poets of the second to fifth decades of the twentieth century. In the poem *Connections*, Mr Simmons, in the 'Gents' of a country pub, reflects how, amongst other things:

History lingers
Like the feel of a cigarette between my fingers.

which seems interestingly fused from:

History has many cunning passages.... (*Gerontion*)
Asleep ... tired ... or it malingers ...
... how should I begin
To spit out all the butt-ends of my days ...
(*Prufrock*).

He remembers the night that his child was born and records that:

We smiled to see our child begin
Dying,

which recalls the famous paradoxical prayer from *Animula*,

Pray for us now and at the hour of our birth.

His rueful *Sonnet for the Class of '58*,

Who wanted so much once, and now need
Only a rise of a hundred pounds, or a car
Or a holiday abroad without the wife,

seems to go back to the sociologizing parts of *Murder in the Cathedral*—

The prize awarded for the English Essay
The Scholar's degree, the statesman's decoration.
All things become less real, man passes
From unreality to unreality. (*Murder in the Cathedral*)

—*The Rock*, and even *Four Quartets:*

The captains, merchant bankers, eminent men of letters
The generous patrons of art, the statesmen and the rulers
... all go into the dark....

And again, as one ponders about the *raison d'etre* of such an uninhibited, Joycean, freely-associational poem as *Connections*, one is inevitably brought back to Eliot's famous pronouncement:

When a poet's mind is perfectly equipped for its work; it is constantly amalgamating disparate experience; the ordinary man's experience is chaotic, irregular, fragmentary. The latter falls in love, or reads Spinoza and these two experiences have nothing to do with each other, or with the noise of the typewriter or the smell of cooking; in the mind of the poet these experiences are always forming new wholes. (The Metaphysical Poets, in *Selected Essays*).

which seems to give a certain status to almost any collection of random thoughts and impressions.

Mr Simmons, of course, has read outside the approved modern authors. *The Ancient Mariner* is admitted as a key reference poem; and is wittily alluded to—

(Am I the first, my wife, that's burst
Into this silent land?)

Rupert Brooke, as we might guess, is used for purpose of parody. 'No deeper wrinkles yet?' muses our modern well-read poet, gazing into the mirror behind the public house bar and recalling Richard of Bordeaux in Westminster Hall, whilst in his *Elegy for an Ideal* he boldly proclaims—

The war you fought solved nothing, in our view

which strangely echoes Dryden's:

Thy wars brought nothing about

—which again most of us remember best from pourings through *Selected Essays*.

However we should not dwell overmuch on

derivative element in Mr Simmons' poems, for after all the probability of irony enables us to claim that all borrowings, whether conscious or unconscious, have their ulterior justification. A degree of borrowing too is a familiar phenomenon in the work of all young poets (—of Shakespeare) and minor poets, and we are not in any case entitled to expect the emergence of a major poet at every turn of the road. Perhaps also the emergence of a major poet at any time depends on the existence of large number of busy, run-of-the-mill, minor poets, who keep alive the tradition of poetry even by the multiplication of minor verse.

In attempting to be fair to the work of any poet for whom major status is not necessarily claimed, our question must be what he has brought to his writing over and above those things he has adopted from those who have influenced him; just as we ask of an educated person (according to Whitehead's precept) what he retains after he has forgotten everything he has been taught. So now we should ask what is our residual impression of Mr Simmons' poetry? After we have made due allowances for its samenesses, what of its differences? Perhaps the poems give a stronger impression as a group than (with a few exceptions) as individual poems. Though we must absolutely beware of implying a necessary connection between the situations and attitudes put forward in the poem and any aspect of reality or biography, the general situation behind the poems consists of a novel combination, I should say, of marriage, parenthood and promiscuity. The ethos is characteristically existentialist, with a decidely provocative bias. The poet is clearly *against* a number of things—especially Presbyterianism, inhibition—

Abroad, all inhibitions melt away (*After Rupert Brooke*) —frustrations, complexes. It appears that, like all good liberals, he swears by Freedom and Truth, which lead him to a complete abdication of certainty about some of the traditional verities:

—the sky is an empty mansion
That public heaven's lost, but we
Have private heavens here,
And private hells. . . . (*What is the Stars?*)

Such girls are like the sunshine,
Good food and better beer. (*A Good Thing*).

I can't tell
Love and just apart . . . . (*Lust*)

He has had his ideals and enthusiasms but on the whole, like the other members of the 'class of 58', he is ready to compromise for various immediate satisfactions which he has no difficulty in regarding as real. He may 'feel sorry' that he is no longer able to be enthusiastic about certain causes but will, it seems, 'continue to tell our children' about, for example, the Idealist.

Who gave and took his medicine and died, without ever being really satisfied with the cause for which he fought.

The compelling reality of lust, the pathos of lost ideals, the fascinating anomalies in the patterns of human consciousness: in these themes Mr Simmons' verse will seem to be typical of a great deal written during the last decade. In expression and in construction his poems rank very creditably among those of his contemporaries, for he makes use of the neat, dextrous, incisive, ironical—sometimes witty—language that avoids the excesses of both romantic effusiveness and the fling—a-paint-pot-in-the-face-of-the-public obscurity of the earlier twentieth century. It is a familiar thesis that poets of the 1950's Movement learnt a great deal from the formality and economy of Augustan verse, especially the earlier Jonson-Marvellian aspects of it; and we can see excellently illustrated in Mr Simmons' poems how the adoption of a widely practised decorum of writing does not necessarily eliminate originality, personal apprehension and feeling.

Every one of the poems in this collection is interesting to read and to 'solve': not one is in bad taste; the sincerity of feeling and the ability to manipulate language which is evident moves us to express the wish that Mr Simmons will persevere in his writing for many years to come. Distinction is to be hoped for, in the case of most poets, after much experience, much thought and reflection, much experiment. My guess is that of the present poems *Ballad of a Marriage*, the title poem, may come to be regarded as a classic, for the integrity of its intimations as to the true (and traditional) nature of marriage and if Mr Simmons continues to write from the essential integrity illustrated in *Ballad of a Marriage* he may well come to write a body of poetry of real significance and distinction.

H. L. B. MOODY

An African Meditation *by* V. O. AWOSIKA, *African Literary and Scientific Publications, Limited, 224 pages, 15s.*

This first book by Dr Awosika is a dedication to his late parents—Rt Rev. Bishop D. O. Awosika and Mrs Alice Remilekun Awosika and is compiled as a monument to reflect the various discussions and inspirations of the author during his stay in England. The aim is to contribute to mutual understanding and healthy relationship between Europeans and Africans hence this imaginative book.

The need for the African to have a sense of belonging, and to be proud of his cultural heritage is almost overstressed. To Dr Awosika, an African must seek to develop or rediscover his own values and ideals, for as long as he pursues exactly the same ends as the European or North American, his only chance is that of a perpetual trailer.

The African woman straightens her hair and curls it, she also uses a wig because she wants to look European. Is she then ashamed of her natural self? Why must she feel inferior? The African wears his woollen suit and tie to the office despite the fact that he feels uncomfortable under the scorching sun. He desperately wants to copy his European counterpart who wears a suit in his country merely because he is cold. Must the African in an attempt to be 'civilized' spurn his own culture? Must he in the name of fashion loose his own sense of judgment and be made to look ridiculous?

The author reiterates the history of the Atlantic Slave Trade in which millions of Africans were shipped to the New World as slaves. Even with the abolition of the Slave Trade, the African has acquired that unmistakable identity of a subordinate of the European. But it would be unrealistic, the author argues, for the African to begrudge or distrust the European because of the past cruelty of slavery. For one thing, slavery in Africa had been a well-established institution before the coming of the European to the African coast. Secondly, the past is essential to assess the present and to determine the future.

The struggle of the African to be his real self, to express himself without being misunderstood and to assert himself is told here at considerable length. Africa is re-emerging not just emerging and because Africans are convinced of their history and ancestors, they become confident about their new age. They can, therefore, face their European counterparts who ostensibly talk about the Medieval Age, and tell him about his own Medieval history—The Empire of Ghana founded around 300 A.D. by Sonike and some famous University Centres of Medieval West African History like Timbuktu, Djenne and Goa. Indeed, the African has a history to be proud of. To Dr Awosika, racial discrimination or racial prejudice is a world-wide knowledge. The former is a resentment focused on a whole group, the latter is personal, a purely psychological element. A vital factor in an attempt to solve the problems of racialism is the promotion of mutual understanding and respect among peoples of different races.

On the contradictions of racial integration, the book points out that the European who goes to Africa usually goes straight into the middle-upper-class stratum, whereas the entry of the African into Western Europe invariably means he is to go into the lower-class group.

Such is the thought-provoking and clear account of the feelings of Dr Awosika towards the naivety of Africans who ape the European.

Perhaps he hit the womenfolk very hard for being apron-strings and may turn a hair as wig-wearing ladies read about *An African Meditation*.

Notwithstanding, this book which penetrates the nerve-centre of African culture is a readable and well written book.

'*An African Meditation*' was published by African Literary and Scientific Publications Limited, Ikeja, Nigeria and costs 15s.

ELIZABETH AKINSOLA

[illegible]

And when awakened by a gust,
They sighed and flagged away [illegible]
And soon began to shed tears
As though to quench
The star-gems within.

M. O. O. KJOKU

ILLUSION

'Tis but in the mind.
Happiness or sorrow
Is of thine own making.

The world is wide, pair and fine;
The world is small, dark and vile;
'Tis but in the mind.

The maker,
He to mankind doth give free will,
Man must choose his path.

Yea, I chose the path
Wide, fair and fine
And what find I?
Darkness and sorrow.

F. R. PEREIRA

IMAGINATION

Imagination, that's the creator's tool.
O'er land and sea we roam,
Bodiless, yet bodied, scanning the ALL.

In thought all things take form,
Both the good and both the bad:
And so, fluid is the world of things.

Imagination, that's the father of all.

EMWINMA OGIERIAIKHI

LA GIOCONDA

This supple brow—
this ripe freshness
and untainted succulence
bathed in sun-set glow

a smile to innocence cleft.
ravishing, unravished;
a blossom unreaped
seducing painter to patriotic theft—

the absolute touch
of immortalized brush.

SAM. O. ASEIN

MILLIPEDE'S MARCH

Head on soil
feelers in air
segments immobile
pushing forward
forward
away from a mound

gained steps lost
failing breath rebuilt
a backward slide
forward
and smooth the march
is on . . .

CHIDI IKONNE

KAINJI DAM

In Bussa where the meand'ring rivu'let spreads
Aft' bathing th' rocky precipitous walls
To drop into a canyon miles in depth
Lies a valley 'naked' of fathomless falls.

A man-made breakwater will 'er span
Exuding power 'kinetic' for works and man
Displac'd by science discover'd in need
Will spring a city new but rare indeed.

The young the old and enlightened—all
Will scroll in rolls aimed to recall
A lost but found Bussa a city hail!
Which historians in a ditty won't rail.

An era of industrial prowess will leap
For surplus supply of electric cheap
Which this gargantuan artifice man has made
To 'illuminate towns countless unde' shade.

LAWRENCE OF ALLAGOA

READERS' LETTERS

QUESTION

CANNIBALISTIC CHRISTIANITY

Sir,

I have read the views expressed by Mr Emokpae on Christianity and Cannibalism.

When Jesus spoke of the 'last day' in which he would raise he who 'eat my flesh and drink my blood' he was referring to that day (which some day is due in about 2,400 years from now) like the day of the deluge and Noah's Ark, which the world undergoes in a never-ending circle—about every 30,000 years, according to some authorities. Jesus spoke about this day in *Matthew* Chapter 24.

The flesh and blood of Jesus are not the material flesh and blood we know. Jesus, like all mystics, veiled His words when He spoke. Even then, He was sufficiently explicit and categorical in *John vi*, 35 and in verses 27, 32, 47, 48, 56, 57 and 63 of the same book, He impresses it on us that we should labour for that meat which perisheth not, that the true bread is of God from above through him, and that while he personified that bread of life, the words that he spoke were the true spirit which sustains, and is life. And so, 'he that believeth on me hath everlasting life.'

At the last day, it is not only or necessarily those that now ostensibly label themselves as Christians that will be raised by Jesus. The Christian is not necessarily the Church goer; it is he who lives the kind of life advocated by Jesus.

One last aspect—that of the Eucharist: 'And he took bread, and gave thanks, and broke it, and gave unto them, saying, *This is my body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me*'—*Luke* 22, 19. It is remarkable that only St Luke, of the four Gospels, records 'this do in remembrance of me.' The others would appear to have laid emphasis on 'This is my body which is given for you.' One conclusion I can draw is that, as usual, Jesus spoke symbolically.

If this view is accepted, then the Eucharist as we know it now, and which, from all indications is based on the sole recording of St Luke, becomes a very debatable affair. On the other hand, the acceptance of my view will go a long way in defending Christians against the charge of cannibalism. So, I sympathize with Emokpae on this issue of the Eucharist. I only hope that 'this do in remembrance of me' has been misinterpreted.

ENWINMA OGIERIAIKHI
BENIN CITY.

ANSWER

Dear Sir,

I regard the logic of both Shane Carthy and Ogieriaikhi as a subterfuge to cover up what holds true in my statement that the feast of Flesh and Blood as practised in the Christian worship is cannibalistic. Whether this feast is administered in the appearance of wafers or wine does not make any difference to the fact that Christians are subjected to believe implicitly that their salvation and that of the entire human race lies in the eating of their deity. That Jesus Christ himself prescribed this ritual to his followers as a guarantee of eternal life is debatable. It is a pity though that the medium of our exchanges does not permit for a closer and thorough examination of this subject.

If I interpret Ogieriaikhi rightly, he is trying, like all Christians, to postulate the force God as the absolute. It seems he is just accepting what he has been told without question. I only hope that in time he will be able to examine his litany more closely and relate it to facts that are irreducible. The force God is a relative quantity and therefore only half of a Whole, the other half is the force Evil. This makes the Christian theory of God's creation of the Devil ex-hypothesis impossible because these two forces are coeval in origin.

ERHABOR EMOKPAE

CONTRIBUTORS

Alan Vaughan-Richards who writes on *Future Architectural Designs* received his professional training in London and qualified in 1950. He specialized in tropical architecture in 1952 and has been in Nigeria for the last twelve years. He has his own practice based in Lagos and is married to a Nigerian; **Dr Donald D. Hartle** who tells us about *Archaeology in Eastern Nigeria* is the Professor of Archaeology in the Laboratory of Archaeology at the University of Nsukka; while **Dr E. J. Alagoa** who writes on *Delta Masquerades* is on th staff of the Institute of African Studies, University Ibadan; **Mr H. L. B. Moody,** of the Abdullahi Baye College, Kano, in this issue also reviews for us *Ball of Marriage* and draws our attention to an omission ma in the authorship of *The Emirates of Northern Niger* to which a reference was made at page 19 of No. It was actually written by S. J. Hogben and A. H. Kirk-Greene.

ELECTRICITY CORPORATION OF NIGERIA

AFRICA'S FASTEST GROWING ELECTRICITY INDUSTRY

For all your information, Contact:

E.C.N. HEADQUARTERS,
24-25, MARINA,
P.M.B. 12030,
LAGOS.
TEL. 23431-9 LINES.

OR IN THE REGIONS:

THE AREA MANAGER,
AREA OFFICE,
KAHALE BUILDING,
AHMADU BELLO WAY,
P.M.B. 2108,
KADUNA.
PHONE 2172

THE AREA MANAGER,
AREA OFFICE,
E.C.N.,
16, OGUI COMM. ROAD,
P.M.B. 1019,
ENUGU.
PHONE 3661

THE AREA MANAGER,
AREA OFFICE,
E.C.N.,
P.M.B. 5110,
IBADAN.
PHONE 21098

if it's Steel look for the name JAMMAL

Builders of:

Truck Bodies Bulk Liquid Transporters
Refrigerated Railway Wagons Storage Tanks
Pontoons Aircraft Hangers Airport Terminal
Buildings Cinemas Residential Flats
Showrooms & Warehouses Workshops & Garages
Petrol Stations Fire Stations

JAMMAL STEEL STRUCTURES LTD
235/237 APAPA ROAD, IJORA, P.O. BOX 435, LAGOS.

BP SUPER

FOR POWER-PACKED

VIVACITY

CENTRAL HOTEL

PHONE 359
BENIN CITY.

AFRICAN ALLIANCE INSURANCE CO., LTD.

For Future Security through Life Assurance

KEEPING PACE WITH DEVELOPMENT

SHELL

To keep in step with a rapidly expanding Nigeria — Shell have built this Lubricating Oil Blending Plant at Apapa — the first in West Africa. At a cost of £210,000 it blends six basic oil grades, with various additives, into 32 different grades of lubricating oils.

YOU CAN BE SURE OF

This is how one company is trying to keep the cost of living down...

Nigerian Fermentation Industries, a company in which the Nigerian Government participates, blends and bottles spirits which have been distilled overseas.

Amongst these are Bols Aromatic Schnapps and Bols Silver Top Dry Gin which comes from N.V. Erven Lucas Bols in Amsterdam, Holland. Bols was established in 1575.

Apart from Bols Schnapps and Silver Top Dry Gin, Nigerian Fermentation bottles Gold Top Whisky, Le Maire Brandy, Boiskaya Vodka, Borrica Rum, Cancia Vermouth and Aperitiva.
Because Nigeria protects this local industry you can buy these locally bottled spirits at an average of 14s per full sized bottle cheaper than similar imported products.

NIGERIAN FERMENTATION INDUSTRIES LIMITED,

21, WAREHOUSE ROAD,

P.O. BOX 383, APAPA. TELEPHONE 56339.

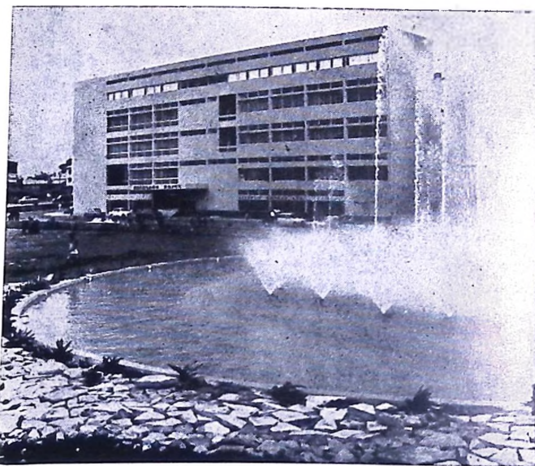
nigeria magazine

RECORDED
31 AUG 1967

No. 94 September 1967 | two shillings

140 well-appointed rooms. 20 suites.
Restaurant. Private dining suites.
2 bars. Ballroom.
Full catering service.
Conference room. Spacious lounges.
Car park. Garden.
Central air-conditioning throughout.

Private bus meets all planes
at Ikeja Airport.



MAINLAND HOTEL

2/4 Denton Street. P. O. Box 2158 Lagos Nigeria
Phone 46101: Cable: Mainland Lagos.

Nigeria Magazine

September 1967 · 94

'Nigeria' Magazine is sold at 2s a copy. Annual subscription in Nigeria is 8s post free. Overseas subscription rate is U.S. $2, elsewhere 12s including postage by surface mail. Payments made by cheques outside Lagos should bear the endorsement 'Commission to Drawer's Account' with the full signature of the Drawer thereto.

All enquiries about advertisement should be directed to the Business Editor, 'Nigeria' Magazine, Exhibition Centre, Marina, Lagos, Nigeria. Phone 20643.

The Editor is always glad to consider original signed articles. While every care will be taken, the Editor cannot be held responsible for the loss or damage of material submitted to him.

'Nigeria' Magazine is published by the Cultural Division of the Ministry of Information, P.M.B. 12524, Lagos.

© NIGERIA MAGAZINE 1967

Editor: T. O. A. ADEBANJO
Asst. Editor: A. K. METTEDEN
Business Editor: L. ALLAGOA
Offices: Exhibition Centre, Marina, Lagos.
Telephone: 23134
Telegrams: Ednigmag, Lagos.

COVER: *Graceful Barhaza performed by a group of Fulani women from Kaduna.*

COVER: *Designed by Tayo Aiyegbusi*

Contents

Royal Palaces, An Index of Yoruba Traditional Culture, 194

Bronze and Silver Antiquities, 210

Dance and Drama in the North, 219

Ikaki—The Tortoise Masquerade, 226

LITERARY SUPPLEMENT

The Sabon-Gari System in Northern States of Nigeria, 242

A Modern Nigerian Sculptor, 248

A Young Bini Poet, 250

Nigerian Music and Musicians: Then and Now, 253

Music Education in Nigerian Schools, 262

BOOKS

Black Eros, 264

Yoruba Religious Carving, 269

POEMS 271

READER'S LETTER, 276

CONTRIBUTORS, 276

ROYAL PALACES: AN INDEX OF YORUBA TRADITIONAL CULTURE

By

DR AFOLABI OJO*

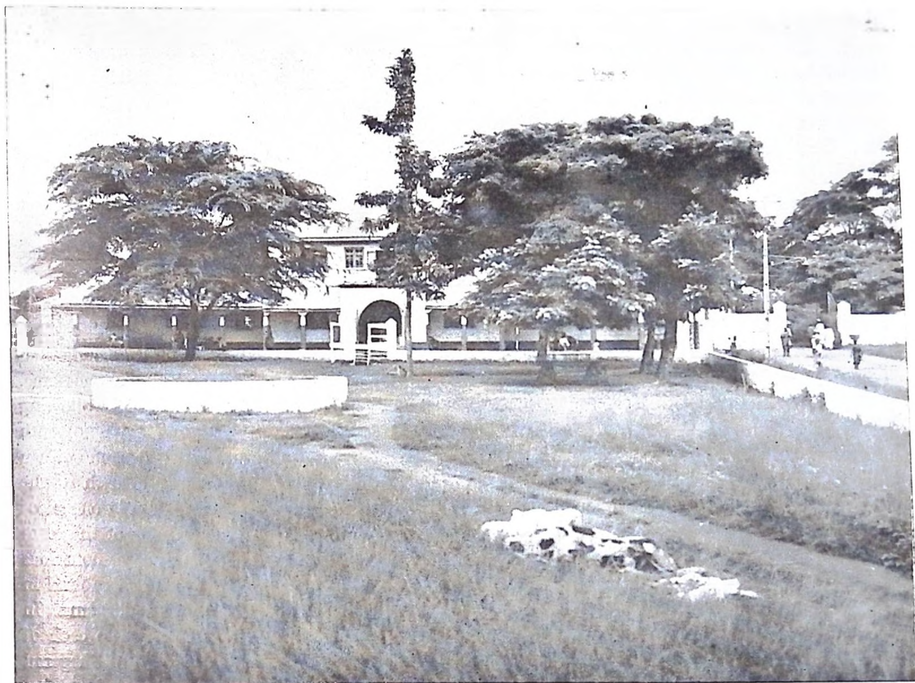
THE Yoruba-speaking peoples have a saying that a foreigner has eyes but cannot see. Put simply this saying means that a non-native in any community normally finds it difficult to appreciate the ways of life and the values and norms of the particular community. Any object which becomes the cynosure of the eyes of foreigners must, therefore, be in a special class of importance of its own. So must have been the royal palaces of Yorubaland for our first written accounts of the superlative characteristics of the palaces came from Hugh Clapperton, a Scot, and Frobenius, a German. Clapperton in 1829 commenting on Old Oyo wrote about its palace as follows: 'The king's houses and those of his women occupy about a square mile and are on the side of the hills, having two large parks, one in front and the other

* Dr Afolabi Ojo is author of 'Yoruba Culture, A Geographical Analysis' and 'Yoruba Palaces, A Study of the Afins of Yoruba land', University of London Press, 1966.

The Palace Ground of the Afin in Oyo

facing the north. They are built of clay and have thatched roofs'.

Frobenius at a later date, in 1910, recorded his own impressions in a moving language thus: 'The palace of Oni, whose massive walls meet the eye from whatever quarter one approaches it, is that which most impresses everyone who visits the town of Ife today. Its front, especially with the open square on which it stands, makes an imposing effect in spite of all its ruin. The walls are mighty, over a yard broad at the base and some eighteen feet high. The mighty entrance is barred by a handsomely sculptured door'.



Open square in front of the Afin in Ife

One simple deduction that can be drawn from the fact that the palaces caught the attention of foreigners and evoked their comments in spite of the contention that they had eyes but could not see is that the palaces must have been structures that were out of the ordinary in their surroundings. They could not but be seen.

The palaces did not evoke as much comments from the Yoruba-speaking peoples themselves. They were more or less taken for granted. This was so mainly because the object of talk among the people was the occupant of the palace, the Oba, rather than the palace itself. It must be noted, however, that the palace and the Oba were so closely linked up in the minds of the Yoruba that one cannot be discussed without the other. Even today in order to put any account of the palaces into its proper perspective, an account of the palace of the Oba in the society and the rank of any Oba in the hierarchy of the Obas of Yorubaland is a necessary preliminary.

Until recently, a Yoruba Oba was placed on the highest pedestal which any living person can attain. He was thought of as the link between the living and the dead, and the vicar on earth of the ancestors. He was the most powerful, the most knowing and the wisest of all living human beings in his kingdom. In short, he was the epitome of man on earth. Therefore, it was assumed that he deserved all the protection, honour, praise, flattery, privacy, decency and comfort that his subjects could muster. As such he was made to occupy a place which would naturally accord with these conceptions of the people about him. This residence is known as *àfin*, the nearest equivalent in the English language being a royal palace.

Quite specifically, the *àfin* in its traditional usage meant the part of the town with apartments for the use of a crowned Oba. And as there was a fixed number of Yoruba crowned Obas, there was also an equal number of *àfins*. However, in recent years of British rule in Western Nigeria, a handful of *bales* (uncrowned Obas) had sought to assert their own independence of some of the recognized traditional crowned Obas. Such bales now wear what may be termed legally won crowns. Even then, in this account of traditional royal palaces, they are not considered as occupying *àfins*. Strictly speaking, it is the rank and status of an Oba as a ruler that can wear a crown as approved by one of the four pre-eminent Obas of Yorubaland that confers on his habitation the name *àfin*. The four pre-eminent Obas are the Oni of Ife, Alafin of Oyo, Awujale of Ijebu-Ode and Alake of Abeokuta.

The residences of head chiefs or rulers who do not wear crowns were quite distinct from the *àfin* or palace. They are known as *ilé olojà* (the home of the overseer of the market). The above distinction accounts for the absence of recognized *àfins* in many Yoruba towns, even some big ones such as Ibadan, Gbongan, Ikire and Ogbomosho, to mention a few. It also accounts for their presence in towns of relatively small size and population such as Idowa, Ogotun and Otun.

Invariably there is only one palace in a kingdom which usually comprises a metropolitan town and a number of suburban towns and outlying villages. Thus the Afin Oyo belongs to Oyo town and a host of other towns and villages in the extensive kingdom which at the zenith of its development occupied an area spreading south-westwards to Dahomey and Togo, south-eastwards to Ife, and southwards to Ibadan and Abeokuta.

Not many palaces had large outlying territories of numerous suburban towns and villages. As a contrast, for instance, a few palaces are found in a one-town kingdom. Such one-town kingdoms, as the name suggests, have no outlying settlements owing allegiance to their crowned rulers. Examples include Ikerre, Emure and Ise, all in Ekiti where crowned Obas are found in close proximity to each other. There are seventeen of them in an area of 2,100 square miles.

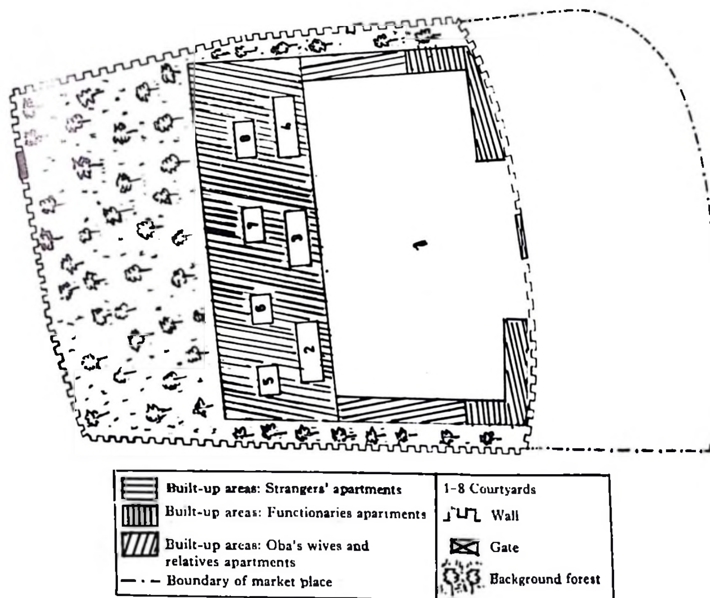
In normal circumstances not more than one Oba rules over a Yoruba town at any one particular time. Where, however, a number of towns with accredited crowned Obas were brought together by the forces of circumstances as a group of distinct settlements that now stay together under one name, as happened during the resettlement following inter-tribal wars of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries in Yorubaland, there could be more than one palace in a town. In such cases each of the former towns that are now assembled in one place occupies a distinct quarter or section of the town and has its own palace. This somewhat anomalous existence of many palaces in one town is found in two towns, namely, Abeokuta and Shagamu. In Abeokuta, there are four palaces, one to each of Alake, Olowu, Agura and Oshile, and in Shagamu there are also four palaces belonging to Akarigbo, Ewusi, Elepe and Amunisan.

Whether there is only one palace or multiple palaces in a kingdom, whether the kingdom is made up of just one town or numerous towns and villages, the *àfins* of Yorubaland have many common characteristics which derived mainly from the broad similarity of traditions surrounding the Yoruba Oba in whichever part of the land he was situated. In the first place, the *àfin* was without question the largest unit of building or family compound in both the town and the kingdom in which it was located. The unparalleled extensive size of the *àfin* as compared

with the other buildings or compounds in the town follows logically from the fact that the size of the Oba's family was always by far the largest in terms of wives, children, relatives, dependants, guests and functionaries. It had all the parts which could provide the Oba in particular and the other inmates in general not only a place of residence but also of work, relaxation, hobby and amusement. Furthermore, the *àfin* was designed to be used by the entire community for a variety of purposes: it normally contained a large open space where the citizens of the kingdom could assemble especially during festivals, an apartment used as a court where justice was dispensed in final and irrevocable terms, places of meetings for different categories of chiefs and so on. Hence it occupied a proportionately large area in comparison with the other parts of the town.

That of Old Oyo has been described by Clapperton as occupying one square mile or 640 acres. The first-hand account of His Highness, Adesoji Aderemi I, the Oni of Ife as to the size of Afin Ife a few hundred years ago speaks for itself: 'I have it on good authority that the present *àfin* is only about one-eighth of the former one which existed intact until about 400 years ago during the reign of one of my predecessors, King Lajodogun.' The present *àfin* of Ife covers an area approximately 20 acres. From actual field work it has been found that the palace grounds at Owo, one of the largest in Yorubaland, covered about 108.5 acres. That of Ilesha spread over 51 acres. These areas are considerable if related to the fact that as many as six compounds were then erected on one acre of land in the other parts of the town by the ordinary extended families.

In the second place, the *àfin* was always located in the central part of the town. Other compounds were erected in all directions away from the *àfin* resulting in a circular to oval shape for the town as a whole which was effectively bounded by the town wall. The location of the *àfin* was such that it was roughly equidistant from the town wall in opposite directions. This pattern is well brought



THE AFIN ILESHA IN 1941

ARAGAN

ESHIR

AFIN OBA

ODO-IRO

ODO-AGBEDE

IDOFIN

...ACE WALL .. ..

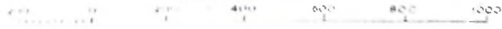
...RMER EXTENSION OF PALACE WALL
...SINTEGRATED BEFORE 1941 .. ..

...URTYARDS .. ..
1. OKEMESE
2. ODIKOTO
3. EYINROPO
4. ODEYANRIN
5. ODEODU
6. ADODO

...UNDARY OF QUARTERS .. ..

A. RESIDENCE OF OBA
B. TOWN HALL
C. GARAGE
D. ILE ORISA
E. ILE OGUN
F. BANUSO RESTAURANT
G. SECRETARIAT
H. POLICE STATION
J. HEALTH...
K. POST O...
L. CENOTA...

SCALE IN FEET



To Ijebu Ijesho

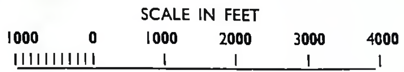
THE AFIN

To

From Epé

ILESHA: BUILT-UP AREAS AND COMPOUNDS OF IMPORTANT CHIEFS IN RELATION TO THE AF

SCALE IN FEET



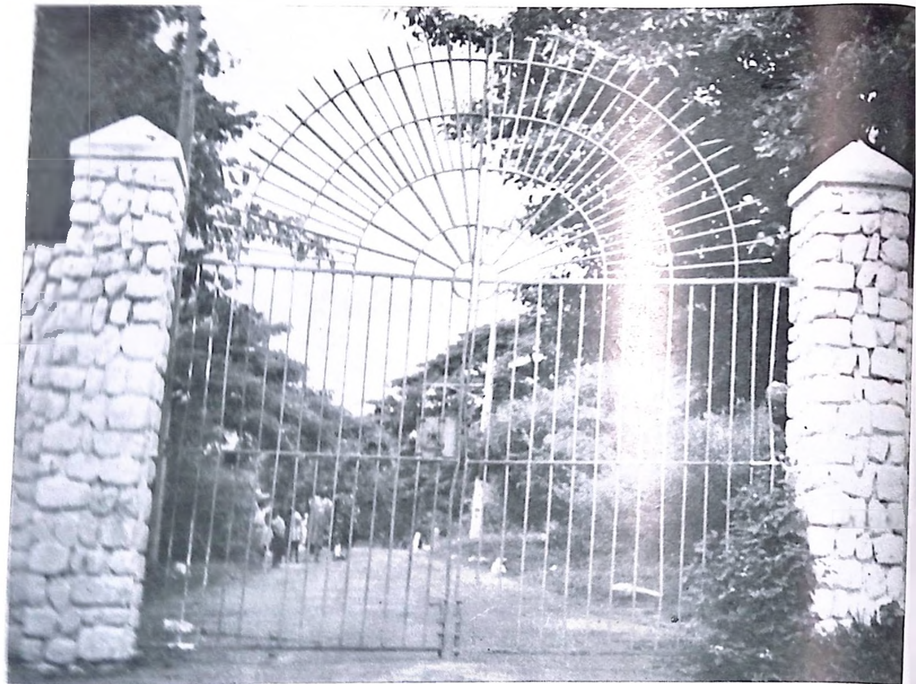
REFERENCE

WALL	
PALACE WALL BUILT AFTER 1941	
BUILT UP AREA	

CHIEFS' QUARTERS

1 CHIEF SALORO
2 CHIEF LEJOKA
3 CHIEF ODOLE
4 CHIEF OBAODO
5 CHIEF RISAWE
6 CHIEF OBANLA
7 CHIEF OGBONI
8 CHIEF LORO
9 CHIEF ARAPETE
10 CHIEF ELEJOFI

[illegible] town plan of Ilesha shown in the accompanying diagram. The centrality of the *àfin* in the layout of the town derived partly from the necessity to afford the Oba maximum protection from whichever direction enemies approached. The location was probably also an outcome of the fundamental philosophical belief of the Yoruba in the significance of the centre. Thus the Yoruba-speaking peoples believed that the junction of routes was both a converging and a diverging point of good and evil. Sacrifices whether placatory, absolutionary or otherwise were offered at junctions



The closed gate of the Palace entrance at Ife

and central places. This aspect of the location of the *àfin* put the Oba within the heart of the town from where he could effectively administer the political, economic, social and spiritual affairs of his kingdom.

In the third place, the *àfins* had a layout and structure that were broadly alike. An *àfin* w surrounded by walls, usually of dimensions th could rival the town wall itself. The walls we built to be high enough to seal away the *àfin* fro the other parts of the town such that the pryi eyes of the inhabitants could never catch a glimp of the happenings within the *àfin*, no matter t angle or position of advantage of the observe Breaking through the walls was the main entran gate. It led into the largest of the courtyards con tained in the *àfin*. This was the main courtyar which, out of the numerous courtyards in the *àfi* was the most accessible with little or no restrictions to the townspeople especially on occasions when they assembled for festivities or were summoned by the Oba for special announcements and meetings.

A fourth common characteristic of the *àfins* is that the back of the built-up parts was usually a

The main gate of Afin Oyo leading to the Aganju Courtyard

Background forest of the palace at Ikere Ekiti

reserved forest background. The background forest provided the necessary space for the Oba's recreational activities. Some Obas engaged in small-scale hunting or farming in the forest. Herbs, shrubs and trees known to be of medicinal value were tended in the forest. In some *àfins* portions of the forest were reserved for interring parts of the Oba's body on death.

A fifth important characteristic of the layout of the *àfin* is that the town's market was usually situated directly in front of it. The market appropriately described as *ọjà ọba* (Oba's market) was traditionally the leading market of the town and was until the recent economic developments leading to the proliferation of market grounds and commercial or shopping centres the focus of the economic activities of the town. Palace servants were wont to raiding the market at intervals to replenish the stock of articles required for use in the *àfin*. Whatever commodity was snatched from the market by the palace servants and conveyed within the walls of the *àfin* became irrecoverable.

A simplified and generalized layout of an *àfin* based on the above characteristics is shown in the accompanying diagram. How closely the simplified pattern approaches an actual *àfin* can be seen by comparing it with the actual layout of Afin Ilesha shown in the next diagram.

It is not what the palace was by itself whether in its size, layout, architecture or general imposing nature that determined its importance, but how the institution it stood for permeated the whole way of Yoruba life. Everything considered it provided yardsticks by which many aspects of Yoruba culture can be assessed or evaluated as some of its influences on Yoruba way of life described hereafter will show.

Oba's market at Oyo

Although Yoruba towns were not deliberately planned in the traditional days, the *àfin*, as the fixed point of reference within the town, brought in an element of order and arrangement. The quarters of the town were arranged in relation to the *àfin* as their centre. The chiefs of each quarter were located at distances from the *àfin* which

reflected the order of their importance. In Ilesha for instance the quarters of the high ranking chiefs were located nearest to the *àfin* and those of the lower rank of chiefs were at increasing distances away. Individual compounds within each quarter bore a relationship to the quarter-chiefs' compounds similar to what the quarter-chiefs' compounds were to the *àfin*. In the final analysis, each individual compound had the *àfin* as its focus.

This link was ensured primarily by the network of paths and roads which all converged on the *àfin* from all parts of the town. In one word the palace was the landmark against which every part of the town was viewed and considered. As such the *àfins* imparted to the towns some measure of order in layout. To that extent, it may be claimed that Yoruba towns were planned.

As has been shown, the *àfin* overlooks the market which was the economic centre of the town. Put differently, the *àfin* and the market were in a sort of symbiosis in traditional times. The Oba as the head of his community was also charged with the responsibility of the economic welfare of the citizens of his kingdom. And this was best done by guaranteeing a well organized market which offered the scope for free and unrestricted economic activities. The siting of the Oba's palace cheek by jowl with the market afforded the Oba an opportunity of controlling the market which was a vital part of the cultural activity of the people.

Besides, some of the religious duties of the Oba on behalf of his kingdom bordered on the economic. He mobilized the views and reactions of the people in tackling the threats to their economy. For instance, when drought and lack of early rains threaten agriculture, he gave concrete expression to steps to be taken to bring the situation to normal by commissioning rain-makers to perform or by offering appropriate sacrifices. These essential duties which emanated from the circumstances of the time and place in which the people found themselves accorded the Oba an aura of a semi-deity and the role of the high priest of the land. Logically, therefore, his residence measured up with the supra-natural position in which he was placed in the society. This meant that the *àfin* was such a building where he could remain unseen and unheard by his subjects. Hence the palace was usually walled round and made to contain numerous apartments within which the Oba could hibernate unnoticed in utter privacy.

What is more significant, sections of the palace were set apart for distinct religious and ritual purposes. In almost every palace, there were sites for taking oaths, for making confessions, for making reparation for sins of omission and commission, for invoking and communicating with the ancestors. This peculiarity is well illustrated in the Afin Oyo where there were separate temples within courtyards built for some deities including *Ogun*, *Sango*, *Orisafunfun*, *Osanyin*. Similar examples can be drawn upon in respect of every other palace. All considerations that touch upon the inner spiritual heart of the inhabitants of Yoruba towns made them regard the palace as a sacred ground which should not be desecrated by any means whatsoever.

The Osemawe of Ondo, Oba Tewogboye II in a festival attire in the discharge of his religious duties

The concern of the people for the religious significance of the palaces were convincingly expressed in the multiplicity and variety of prohibitions and taboos with which they beheld the [illegible] of immortality within the *afin* [illegible]. For instance, no male, except beautiful and wondrous in the land such that it became the nerve centre of the arts, crafts and philosophy of the people. Since the Oba was the visible image of the ancestors, his residence was made to contain and incorporate the representations of the ancestors themselves. Hence the *afins* became

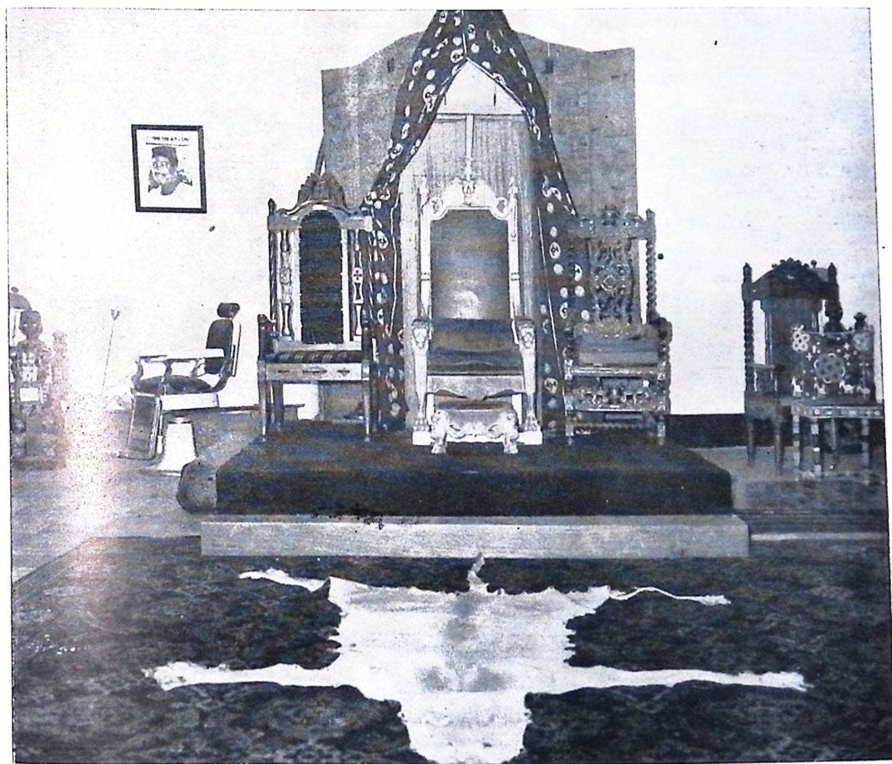
One of the old temples at the Ife Palace

the Oba, could inhabit within the precincts of the afin. To make assurance doubly sure male servants were castrated and repeated checks were carried out to remove any doubt. Births and deaths were not allowed to take place on palace grounds. No one dared to point towards the palace or even touch the walls. It was, to all intents and purposes, a holy of holies.

Its size, layout, pattern, architecture and other characteristics were devised to reflect this holy conception of the residence of the Oba. This explains why the palace contained all that was the museum of the kingdom especially for art works depicting the ancestors. Fortunately, the Obas being, by all standards, the wealthiest members of the community were able to put themselves in the position of the chief patrons of the products of arts and crafts from within their kingdoms. In return the artists made a sizeable proportion of the art products, whether of wood, clay, stone or brass, to represent the Oba and other members of the royalties; this has been shown quite clearly by the products of the arts and crafts of Ife.

Most of the time, the artists executed their work within the walls of the *àfin*. Every palace had courtyards or apartments for craftsmen, whether bead workers, umbrella-makers, sculptors and carvers. But the presence of the craftsmen in just a few parts of the *àfin* was felt and seen throughout the built-up parts of the *àfin* in that their products of arts and crafts were incorporated in the building itself. The posts which supported in palaces and rarely so in other buildings.

The *àfin* also accommodated other occupants whose services were no less tangible although not as concretely or visibly depicted as those of the craftsmen and artists. Men of talents normally converged on and resided in the *àfin*. Historians who could bring to live the past of the kingdom, fathers of medicines (*babalawos*) who could keep at bay illnesses and frailties of the body, *ifa* priests who



The royal throne carved in beautiful works of arts both local and foreign at the Palace in Oyo

the eaves of the roofs were elaborately carved. So too were the mud-pillars which had bold mud-sculptures often brilliantly painted. The architecture of the palace was in a class of its own by far ahead of those of the other parts of the town. For instance the *kòbì* architecture was found were reputed for having powers of clairvoyance and foresightedness assembled in the palace and were assured of a sustenance and maintenance by the Oba who required their services for himself and the kingdom. So great and invaluable were the contributions of these learned men that the

Carved post at the Afin in Ife

people claimed that the Oba can never exhibit traits of foolishness and ignorance because of the assured advice of the wise men within his court.

Just as the Oba relied on the tips given by his learned subordinates for his unparalleled wisdom which symbolized the level of the philosophy of his kingdom so he depended on the entire populace for the erection and maintenance of the palace. The mammoth size of the palace is a resultant of the fact that many hands were at work in establishing it. In truth, the Yoruba palace was the palace of the people for not only did the people erect and maintain it but, by native laws and customs, they own it. It is in every respect a house which the people built but in which the Oba lives.

The Afin Ilesha which has been singled out to illustrate this article can further be referred to for the purpose of portraying the distribution of the

builders of the palace. Age-groups within the metropolitan town itself had and still have certain sections of the *àfin* assigned to them for erection and maintenance. The inscriptions bearing the names of the different age-groups are still today fixed along the sections of the building for which they are responsible. Certain days of the year are usually set aside by each of the age-groups for whatever work has to be done on the *àfin*. The subordinate towns and villages within the Ilesha kingdom also have their own share of work which they perform with punctiliousness and ceremony. There are days set apart for supplying building materials as in Oyo town where the *Beere* festival (feast of supplying thatching grass) is usually celebrated with pomp and pageantry.

The fact that the *àfin* belonged to the people was exploited to supply the large labour that supported its glory and splendour. This same fact has been responsible for its decay in recent years mainly because what was formerly everybody's property is now treated as if it were no particular person's property. Now that communal labour can hardly be pooled for the upkeep of the *àfin*, the Oba alone can no longer keep it intact as before. Worse still, there is a parallel trend in the ever-decreasing number of dependants and functionaries of the Oba who formerly inhabited the *àfin*. The

Bodyguards and other functionaries at the Afin in Oyo

Although the grip of the palace on the culture of its kingdom is not as tight as before it is still well-known that the hold is not now entirely loose. Quite certainly however the last stages of the palaces as an index of the culture of the area in which they are found are now being reached. Whether the palaces will continue to any appreciable degree to represent an aspect of the culture of their kingdom will depend on the future of Obas in the scheme of things in Yorubaland since they, in particular by the nature of their status in the society, will determine what will become of the palaces, whether preservation with modernization or total ruin leading to oblivion.

BRONZE AND SILVER ANTIQUITIES

By

G. O. SHOGBOLA

IT is four thousand years since metal was first used in Western Asia, in Egypt and in some parts of Europe. At that time the Neolithic form of pasturing and stock breeding had been established in many parts of Asia and Europe. But by no means the whole of the continents had been influenced. Even in Great Britain, the new way of living was found only in the southern half of England, and though the people of Brittany and the coastal regions of the Iberian peninsular had adopted the neolithic culture, those who lived in the interior parts of both France and Spain were only just beginning to adopt it.

By about 1800 B.C. the pastoral way of living had been adopted by the people in virtually every part of Great Britain and Ireland, in all the regions of France and Spain, in North-Eastern Germany, and in some places around the Baltic. Copper based cultures had arisen in southern Spain, the islands of the Mediterranean, Danubia, S. Russia as far as Volga, and in Northern Greece. By 1500 B.C. the copper based cultures were to be found also in both Northern and Southern Italy, in Bulgaria and Bessarebia.

But in the regions mentioned above, where the people had then at an earlier date acquired metal cultures, bronze had then become the dominant metal. It was being used in Mesopotamia, Egypt, Cyprus, Crete and the other islands of the Aegean, in all parts of the peninsula of Greece, in the Troad and in many parts of Anatolia.

Museums today hold these historic records of the development of human progress in the form of objects made by man for ages, even, to the remotest past. One of the tasks of the museum, therefore, is to preserve them for future generations to study. The responsibility of preserving the past is a challenge—a battle between scientific methods and decay, and the people entrusted with the preservation of the past must be prepared to meet this challenge. Some of the greatest collections of antiquities giving clues to the development of man came from Egypt, a nation in Africa, to which the preservation of the past was all important.

The preservation of ancient metal antiquities pose many problems which must be considered not only from practical, but from ethical perspectives. The variety of metals include iron, silver, copper, and such alloys as steel, bronze and pewter. Some of these will tarnish, others will rust; some are hard, some are soft; others are liable to disease;

Bronze object being examined after consolidation in a chemical laboratory

and nearly all of them require different techniques of conservation and restoration. Both the character and fabric of a specimen would be damaged if active corrosion products are not removed. A knowledge of both is valuable to a museum, and analysis and other scientific experimentation must in no way damage or destroy the originality of the object. Treatment is a two-part process of cleaning and stabilizing. The former is necessary only in instances where the specimen would be damaged if corrosion products were not removed or where a design is known to be obscured. The latter is always essential since copper corrosive salts appear on untreated bronzes with alarming rapidity. These salts often create their own stability and form what is known as patination. Extensive check is, therefore, inevitable before a bronze is declared stable. Occasionally the copper metal content of a specimen has been completely converted to copper salts so that the decay products alone preserve the shape and appearance of the object. Cleaning under these conditions would mean a total disintegration; hence stability is the most important factor or the most suitable thing to do.

Archaeological evidence may be destroyed if

[illegible] methods are used in any treatment of bronze. Considerable research and study have been done both in the field of analysis and classification of corrosion products. Many factors and facts about ancient metal processing and manufacture can be obtained from analysis of what are called mineral alteration products.

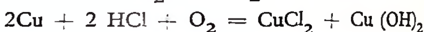
Bronze objects react with their environment to form alteration products which are composed of the following main substances; cupric carbonate, cupric chlorides, cuprous oxide and cuprous chlorides. These substances which form surface layers of varying thickness are usually known collectively as Corrosion and Decay. They are valuable and interesting in their own right, but for the purpose of general treatment of bronze objects, their effects on metals are their most important aspects. If stable and not disfiguring, the mineral products can form a noble protective patination over the entire surface of an object. If they are, however, reactive, they continue to form on the metal until no metal is left. The layers formed, even if they are not very deep, often obscure details. And if they are deep, can disfigure an antiquity beyond recognition. But in spite of this disfigurement, they are part of its history and discretion should be used in their removal.

BRONZES

When bronze objects which are excavated in a corroded condition arrive in the museum laboratory, the museum chemist has to consider what kind of preservative treatment is necessary. The first thing to do is to examine the object in order to assess the nature of the corrosion products, and the extent to which they have been formed. On the basis of this information, a decision will be taken as to the methods of treatment to be adopted.

The chemical examination of the corrosion products on excavated bronzes, often incorrectly referred to as patina, has shown that the agent which is primarily responsible for corrosion in the ground is the deep seated white waxy cuprous chloride which lies underneath the upper layer of red cuprous oxide (cuprite) and the green basic cupric carbonate (malachite). Incidentally, it is also this cuprous chloride which can be responsible for 'bronze disease', a type of corrosion which occurs on bronze in museums and manifests itself in the formation of light green powdery spots. If the bronze is kept in a dry atmosphere, in which the relative humidity is maintained below the critical limit of fifty per cent, then under such dry conditions cuprous chloride is quite stable. However if the museum becomes too damp, the air and moisture vapour will penetrate through porous areas in the corrosion layers and react with the cuprous chloride, leading to the formation of hydrochloric acid which then attacks the metal forming the light green powdery spots of the basic cupric chloride. These reactions may be represented by the following equations:

$$2\ CuCl + 2\ H_2O = Cu_2O + 2HCl$$



$$2Cu + 2\ HCl + O_2 = CuCl_2 + Cu\ (OH)_2$$

METHODS OF TREATMENT

Since it is frequently impossible to ensure a dry environment in a museum, it is, therefore, necessary that reliable methods for treatment of corroded and bronzes suffering from disease must be based at nullifying the insidious activity of the cuprous chloride. This is the basic principle, but the way in which it can be achieved must be considered along with other factors which will depend upon the precise nature of the object. In general, there are three different groups of bronzes to be considered. These are: (*a*) Bronzes in which there is still sound metal underlying the corrosion layers, which may be either unsightly or which may conceal ornamental details or inscriptions, so that their complete removal is justifiable. (*b*) Bronzes, particularly those like the Chinese ones, where the corrosion is present in the form of a thin smooth layer which has a pleasant aesthetic appearance, a true or noble patina, and bronzes where mineralization has proceeded so far that there is little or no sound metal present. (*c*) Bronzes, which must be given special treatment, because they cannot be safely immersed in an aqueous solution, for example, bronze inlaid with enamel. The methods which have been evolved for the treatment of these three different groups are as follows:

Final drying of bronze object in the oven

Another stage in the testing of bronze object. This is conservation by aqueous method using sodium sesquicarbonate

Group (a)

The standard procedure here is to use suitable solvents for the successive removal of the various layers of mineralization—the whole process being referred to as the 'stripping' of the bronzes. The first stage is to immerse the bronze in an alkaline solution of Rochelle salt which will dissolve out the malachite. When this has been completed, the bronze is then immersed in dilute solution of sulphuric acid which will attack the cuprite. At this stage, the underlying layer of cuprous chloride would have been laid bare, and this could then be eliminated by the process of cathodic reduction, preferably carried out electrolytically in an alkaline solution.

Group (b)

The treatment in this group necessitates the use of reagent which will have no visible effect on the corrosion layers—the patina, but which will penetrate these layers, react with the cuprous chloride and render it harmless. Such a reagent is sodium sesquicarbonate. When a bronze which is unstable and exhibits bronze disease is immersed in a dilute (about 5%) solution of this reagent, the alkaline sodium sesquicarbonate will neutralize the hydrochloric acid which is the actual agent responsible for the bronze disease. This is a slow proce-

done as the sodium sesquicarbonate may have to penetrate thick layers of corrosion. It often takes many months before all pockets of cuprous chlorides become eliminated. The course of treatment is followed by testing the solution at intervals for chlorides, replenishing the solution as required, until the test for chloride eventually is found to be negative.

Group (c)

Both the foregoing procedures involve the use of aqueous solutions, and, therefore, in order to treat bronzes which cannot be subject to such conditions, it is necessary to consider an alternative method for treatment of bronze disease. A special sort of 'dental' technique has been evolved by Mr Organ formerly of the British Museum, now at the Royal Ontario Museum in Canada, for bronzes in this group. The areas of bronze disease are first carefully excavated so as to uncover the cuprous chloride, and then silver oxide powder, either dry or moistened, with dry methylated spirit is rubbed into the exposed cuprous chloride. This reacts with the silver oxide forming a layer of stable silver chloride, which is impervious to moisture and seals off the corroding areas. The treated bronze is then deliberately exposed to an atmosphere of seventy-eight per cent relative humidity for a period of about twenty-four hours both to mature the protective film of silver chloride and to ensure that the treatment has been adequately carried out. If bronze disease reappears during this period of exposure to humid conditions, then the bronze is dried and the treatment repeated as required until humidification test proves to be negative. It may then be assumed that the bronze has been rendered stable.

INTENSIVE WASHING

The next important question to be considered is that of the final washing of bronzes which have been treated by aqueous methods for the removal of corrosion products. It must be realized that there will always remain some residue of chlorides in the pores of the metal. If one is to guarantee that a treated bronze will remain in a permanently stable state under normal museum conditions, then, it is essential that all traces of chlorides

Non-Thermal. Drying using alcohol, and petroleum ether in swab of cotton wool. The alcohol removes the water, the petroleum ether removes the alcohol and it evaporates leaving the object permanently dry

Close-up view of the corroded area showing the etching

be completely removed. In order to achieve this it has been necessary to device a special procedure of 'intensive washing' carried out under controlled conditions.

The treated bronze is soaked in successive bath of distilled water with alternate cycles of heating and cooling and the progress of washing is followed by measuring at frequent intervals the electrical conductivity of the wash-water. They will rise as the chlorides are extracted, and the wash-water is changed as required until eventually the electrical conductivity ceases to rise and remains at a constant low value. At this stage a test for chloride is carried out with silver nitrate under special conditions so as to give maximum sensitivity; if this test proves to be negative, it can be assumed that traces of chlorides have been eliminated and that the bronze will be permanently stable.

SILVER

Silver is one of the oldest precious metals. Its traces can be found as far back as Ur of the Chaldees and in ancient Egypt. Its value then can be guessed from the behaviour of robbers in those ancient days; whenever they broke into tombs, it was silver they often collected before gold.

The nature of the corrosion products or surface deposits which form on the silver object will depend not only on the type of soil in which they are buried, but also on the chemical composition of the silver, that is, whether the object is made of relatively pure silver or whether it is composed of a base silver which is alloyed with a fair amount of copper. In the former case the corroding will consist usually of the mineral cerargyrite (silver chloride) commonly referred to as horn-silver, if the object has been excavated from a soil containing chlorides. Whereas in the case of base silver the copper content or constituent will be preferentially corroded, and the object will be covered with a heavy deposit of copper corrosion products leaving the silver itself largely uncorroded. Since the subsequent treatment will differ in the two cases, it is appropriate to consider them separately.

TREATMENT OF PURE SILVER OBJECTS

The main problem to be considered here is whether it is feasible or desirable to remove completely the layer or corrosion products. It must be remembered that treatment must be limited to the exposure of any surface detail or ornament present on the object. If preliminary

examination shows that there is a solid core of silver underlying the corrosion products, then there is every justification for attempting to remove the silver chloride layer, especially when they have a grey earthy appearance of little aesthetic value. This can usually be done by a process of reduction using either electrochemical methods or electrolytic reduction. The silver chloride is thereby reduced to a white spongy deposit of metallic silver which can easily be removed by brushing and any residue remaining can be burnished to confer the metallic quality. Another useful process for the removal of thick silver chloride (horn silver) is to brush the surface with a glass brush soaked with fifteen per cent solution of thiourea. This is most suitable for cast silver objects like buckles and ornament that are robust. The chemical action is mild and can be controlled easily. It can also be used in cases where we have silver inlaid with niello (*See* Plenderleith's Conservation [illegible] pp 221–224).

It is often that a silver object is so heavily corroded that little or no silver remains under the horn-silver as will be the case when silver has been buried for a long period in a salty soil, then it is normally impracticable to consider the removal of the horn-silver because the standard methods of reduction would convert the horn-silver into a non-coherent mass of silver.

Since, however, silver chloride unlike cuprous chloride is stable under museum conditions, treatment should only be carried out with a view to improving the appearance of the object, and to exposing surface details of the ornament. This can best be done by mechanical methods or by local application of solvents. The problem of reducing horn-silver so as to produce a coherent mass of silver, which would have reasonable mechanical strength and retain the shape of a completely corroded object, has been recently investigated in the British Museum laboratory. (The Object-Silver lyre excavated by Sir L. Wooley at Ur). This object was in a fragmentary condition—the pieces consisting of purplish grey horn-silver mounted on a wooden support. The lyre was dismantled and the separate pieces were backed with a synthetic resin within which wire of silver to conduct the electric current was embedded. These were then subjected to a special process of electrolytic reduction in a five per cent solution of caustic soda using a combination of direct and alternating currents. Under these conditions, it was found that the horn-silver could be successfully converted into a coherent silver, which retained all surface markings.

Finally, objects recovered from soil and which contain only little chlorides may be covered with a thin film of silver chloride which forms an agreeable patina that enhances the appearance of the object. It is clearly desirable on aesthetic grounds to preserve such patina. However, if the patina is concealing fine ornament, then it may be considered permissible to attempt to expose the ornament. This can be done with the judicious rubbing of the patina with a cloth impregnated with a mild abrasive.

CONSOLIDATION OF FRAGILE BRONZE AND SILVER OBJECTS

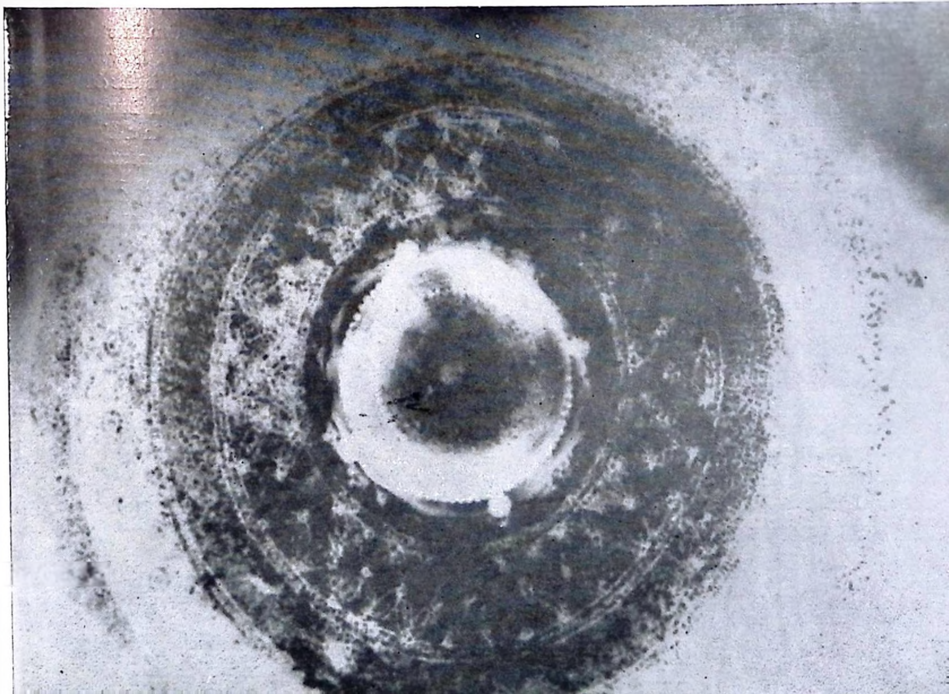
The first problem which will be considered is that of the corroded bronzes that are so extensively mineralized that very little pure metal remains. In such cases the only feasible treatment is to remove extraneous matter, such as clay, by mechanical means, treat any active bronze disease either by the sodium sesquicarbonate or the silver oxide method, and then devise suitable methods for consolidating the bronze so that it can be handled safely. If the object is mechanically sound and only the mineralization layers are friable and require consolidation, it will be sufficient to brush on carefully five per cent solution of soluble nylon in industrial methylated spirit. This material is manufactured by ICI under the trade name: Maranyl nylon C109/P Grade DV55. In the continent of Europe it is distributed under the trade name CALATON CB. The particular features of these meterials which make them specially useful for the consolidation of friable patina on bronze are: (1) The film is remarkably *matt* and does not confer any unwanted sheet which would be aesthetically unpleasant, and (2) the film is flexible so that no contractile forces are exerted on mineralization and there is no risk of damage by flaking. On the other hand, if the

object is not mechanically sound, or if it is necessary to repair the lacunae, it will be necessary to devise some form of reinforcement. The actual method to be used depends upon the particular reqiurements in a given case.

ANOTHER PROBLEM

Another problem in consolidation may arise in the case of base silver objects which have been treated so as to remove the copper corrosion deposits which form on the surface of the objects. When these deposits have been removed, it may be found that the object if it were originally made of thin silver alloy, is very fragile. In such cases, it will, therefore, be necessary to devise some form of consolidation which will give the object mechanical strength. A good example of the way in which this problem can be tackled arose in connection with the treatment in the British Museum of a silver hanging bowl of early Christian origin excavated in 1958, on the site of the 19th Century Church in St. Ninian's Island. The object was a thin base silver sandwiched between layers of copper corrosion products and it was necessary to remove these layers in order to restore the original appearance of the bowl. When this had been done using the formic acid method, it was thought necessary to consider the question of providing an internal support which would act as a permanent reinforcement. It became clear that materials such as plaster, shellac or nitrocellulose which were used in the past and are still in use, would not be suitable in this case. It was, therefore, necessary to devise or evolve different techniques using a material which had to satisfy certain definite criteria. These are (*i*) it had to be colourless and transparent; (*ii*) strong but not brittle; (*iii*) it has to adhere well to the silver; (*iv*) it had to be easy to apply without the use of heat and, (*v*) it had to set from the liquid state to the solid without undergoing appreciable shrinkages. This last criterion is of paramount importance because if there were appreciable shrinkage the resultant contractile forces would cause serious distortion of

X-ray photograph of bronze showing the structure and the rate of penetration of corrosion. The white areas show sound metal. The black—the corrosion penetration



[illegible] cold-setting epoxy resin is an [illegible] treatment. The actual [illegible] ten parts of Araldite resin [illegible] hardener HY951 and one [illegible]. This was applied as a [illegible] brushed over the interior of the [illegible] turn-table in slow rotation. In [illegible] possible to build up a uniform [illegible] resin which reinforced the [illegible] and gave the bowl sufficient mechanical strength.

This type of resin is quite suitable for the treatment of silver objects, but its use on bronze objects is precluded by the fact that the hardener used in the formulation of cold-setting epoxy resins are amines of various types. There is a risk, therefore, that this will react with residual copper minerals producing blue or green compounds, thus staining the bronze. Thus the problem of consolidation and repair of bronze objects in a fragile or fragmentary condition, when dealing with a different type of synthetic resin has to be used, still bearing in mind the two most essential properties; namely low shrinkage on setting and good adhesion to the metal. A suitable material has been found in the special cold-setting polymethacrylate resin manufactured in Germany under the trade-name TECHNOVIT 4004a, which consists of a powder and liquid that set in about twenty minutes at room temperature when they are stirred together. The initial shrinkage on setting is negligible, and the material has the great merit that whilst setting it passes through a stage when it has a pasty consistency so that it can be worked into shape. Thus it can be used for the restoration of missing parts in corroded objects and give strength to such objects. A similar material is also available under the trade-name of PLEXIGUM 355 manufactured by Rohm and Hass of Darmstadt. The use of synthetic resins for the consolidation of fragile objects has made it possible to develop techniques which would have been virtually impossible using the kind of materials available in the past.

CONCLUSION

Summing up, it is hoped that an adequate indication has been given of the guiding principles which must be followed in the development of a scientific approach to the problems that arise in conservation of bronzes and silver antiquity objects. The need to examine an object thoroughly before deciding upon a method of treatment is of paramount importance, and it is equally essential that the treatment should be carried out according to sound scientific principles. These aims should always be borne in mind in a museum laboratory. If preservative treatment of bronze, metals and silver objects is conscientiously carried out, there is every reason to believe that objects leaving the museum laboratory will be in sound conditions and will remain stable under normal museum conditions. If, however, any unforeseen changes should occur, it is the duty of the museum curator to consider whether the environmental conditions have altered in a significant way. Consultation with the Conservation Specialist should then follow so that the nature of the problem can be investigated with a view to taking necessary remedial measures.

DANCE AND DRAMA IN THE NORTH

By

PEGGY HARPER

DANCE is an essentially ephemeral art: an art of the moment. The excitement of a good dance performance lies in the intense concentration with which the contributing elements come together at the moment of performance. What sociologists refer to as ethnic dance expresses a way of life: the beliefs, attitudes and habits of people living within a homogeneous community. It is a form of dance which evolves as a statement of life in such a community, and changes in the dance reflect new elements or attitudes within that society. In this context the dance is as familiar to the audience as it is to the performers: in some instances the spectators participate formally or spontaneouslly in the performance, and in all cases they are there to assure that the dance is performed as traditionally required and that new developments accord with what is accepted as the essential function of the dance.

As an expression of the patterns and rhythms of daily life, a dance performance may continue for hours or may repeat familiar patterns as part of a festival or ceremony extending over a number of days. Both performers and audience revel in this as a statement of their deepest convictions and the common experiences of their daily lives. There is seldom an exact length of time allowed for a dance, in contrast to a theatrical situation in which a performance of specific duration is deliberately created by a director and his performers for an unfamiliar audience.

The theatrical audience pay to be entertained: to experience a heightening of their perceptions or to 'be taken out of themselves' in delight at a fresh presentation of a recognizable theme. This requires variety in the development of the material and surprise in the manner of presentation. The performance must be designed to capture and hold the interest of the audience as their span of concentration is limited by the fact that, though the convention may be familiar, the content and/or form of the presentation is not. This requires that the performance be limited to a definite and predictable length of time. The individual members of the audience usually attend one performance and though their attendance presupposes a common interest, it is by chance of circumstance that they attend the same performance.

They are far from being the closely related members of a homogeneous community which includes spectators and performers as a social entity and thus find the continuous repetition of a theme unbearable in its monotony, for it has not the enchantment of being a statement of their particular habits and beliefs. They need the development of a theme and variety in presentation to keep them in their seats.

So that there are essential differences in the audience-performer relationship in a traditional or ethnic and in a modern theatrical context. If an ethnic dance is moved into a theatrical setting it is usually required to perform a different function and will necessarily change to meet the demands of the new situation. These changes need sensitive and sympathetic handling by a director or organizer if the dance is to survive the transition as performance. But whatever the standard of the result, it will no longer be the original dance but a performance which may use spatial designs, rhythmic patterns and dynamic qualities typical of a particular form of ethnic dance but now seen purely as a display of dancing for entertainment, or used for a dramatic purpose in a theatrical setting.

There are forms of dance in Nigeria that can be described as ethnic in that they are an integral function of a homogeneous society. But with the radical, social and cultural changes, brought about by the establishment of an international way of life, come modern forms of communication: film, television and theatre. These must be met in contemporary Nigerian terms, with the complex

A gr... of young girls from Adamawa performing the Kilba Dance to flute played by the male dancers

Lef..: Ingough Dancers of the Shangeu-tiev area who were justly awarded the winning cup for dance

of indigenous and foreign elements this implies. There are few communities that have not been affected by these rapid and radical changes which are necessarily reflected in the performing arts.

More and more, dances that have remained relatively stable in form for generations[1] now travel to areas where they are performed purely as entertainment for paying audiences for whom the dance is unfamiliar. So that the popular term 'traditional dance' can be regarded as covering authentic ethnic dances and dance derived from these which have adopted entertainment for a foreign[2] audience as their primary function and have made the necessary adaptations previously mentioned.

Arts Festivals which have been held annually in the former Regions of Nigeria have proved to be an important catalystic element in the movement of dancers and musicians away from their home areas into the sphere of entertainment and modern theatre. The organizers of these Arts Festivals have two principal aims: first, to give traditional performers a sense of the dignity and value of their arts in the modern ferment of cultural transition and to find a place for these arts in the

[1] In that new elements have been introduced to accommodate local changes but the dance has retained the basic patterns, rhythms and intention of performance.

[2] Foreign implying an audience of a different culture and not necessarily of a different country.

The Ashe Dancers and musicians from Kabba in a delightful performance

contemporary urban context. And in doing this they aim to achieve their main purpose of exhibiting the arts of their province, region or state in such a way that they become known and respected by people of other cultures and countries. The success of a festival of the performing arts depends largely on the orientation given to the performers by the organizers responsible for the festival.

The organizers of dance and drama for the Northern Nigerian Festival of the Arts held in Kaduna in March 1967 are to be congratulated on a number of counts. Dance, music, singing, acrobatic and comic entertainment were presented in an attractive setting for two and a half hours on every afternoon of the week of the festival. The smooth running of the programmes, with none of those dreaded awkward 'waits' between items, indicated an expertise of stage management. Each group was allocated sufficient time to establish their performance without too great a repetition of themes for an audience largely unfamiliar with the styles displayed. An average of eight groups performed each day and consisted of a well-balanced selection of the performing arts. The audience was treated to a minimum of formality and the week afforded a unique selection of the arts of the then Northern Provinces as each province was represented by a number of teams with different styles of dance and accompanying arts.

The organizing directors knew their job and the audiences were well treated: their requirements were met with consideration and efficient planning. What of the performers? For many, such a festival must be a traumatic experience: what has been a familiar and integral part of the fabric of daily

life had become spotlit as a 'cultural' entertainment for foreigners, in competition with similar arts from other areas. In many cases this must have required a radical readjustment of attitudes and a rapid change of traditionally accepted habits. The performers were housed in spacious accommodation with excellent rehearsal facilities but an interesting study waits to be made on how different types of dance are affected by competitive conditions: which improve, which deteriorate and why.

The regional festival was preceded by festivals at a provincial level where performers for the centralized event had been selected. As the festival proceeded it became clear that in some provinces the choice had been made with sound perception and judgement, but possibly other provincial organizers had not been so well suited to this highly specialized task. As the week went by I felt more and more strongly that I should like to have attended the provincial competitions: to have seen the dance teams as they come fresh from their rural areas: some dance groups seemed to thrive and improve in the somewhat regimented competitive atmosphere, in other cases it was difficult to credit that the province could not produce better material, or was it that the pressures of the series of festivals had had an undermining effect on the performers? It became obvious that in making a choice of material, organizers should look for those artists who can readily adapt to new conditions of performance, and that the responsible positions of the organizer calls for skill and experience in the particular arts and the staging of them.

Some excellent performances of dance and

The Tokai-Borgu men's group from Ilorin in a most effective performance at the festival

A magnificent team of male dancers performing the Bid-Bid Dance from Bauchi

music were presented particularly from the Benue, Bauchi, Adamawa and Katsina areas and Kaduna produced a most interesting variety of highly skilled artists. In these instances the costumes added to the individual style and character of the dance. It was more difficult to appreciate the groups from provinces where a festival uniform had been designed for all the performers from that area: it is surely the unique and individual rather than the political or wider cultural allegiances that are valuable in such a context. It was unfortunate that some of the authentic costumes were regarded as too crude, in that they were made of animal hides or local woven cloth, to appear at a centralized public performance: the authentic dress is usually well designed to display the dance to advantage.

The Dumas dancers from Bornu detracted from their performance by wearing heavy European gym shoes which eliminated the subtle foot movements characteristic of that style of dance, and (possibly from some mistaken ideas of decency?) the graceful hip movements which are of the essence of the dance were omitted so that the dance became rather a dreary progression of formation movements reminiscent of the more tired of the folk-dances of Europe. The performance lacked the grace and charm of the dance seen at its best in Bornu. The same dance was skilfully performed by the Dumas dancers of Kaduna.

But these disappointments were soon forgotten in the wealth of excellent dancing from other areas. The Ingough dancers of the Shanger-tiev area of Benue Province were justly awarded the winning cup for dance. They are dancers of outstanding technical and artistic achievement and provided excellent entertainment accompanied by remarkably fine drumming. This group has organized and practised its dance as entertainment: deve-

loping the most interesting movement sequences of the dances of their area, and condensing the maximum variety of these sequence into the time allowed for competitive performance with a theatrical flair for spectacle and humour. Over the past three years they have become professional entertainers of a high calibre.

The Barhaza dance performed by a group of Fulani women from Kaduna was charming. The women were graceful in movement and delightful in the elegance of their costume.

The Bid-Bid dancers from Bauchi were a magnificent team of male dancers from the town of Bilri whose repetitive shoulder movements was a virtuoso element of their performance. I regretted the addition of white shorts to their completely adequate traditional costume.

The Tokai-Borgu men's group from Ilorin gave a most effective performance which created an atmosphere and feel of their traditional way of life, as did the Ashe dancers and musicians from Kabba with a delightful performances by a group of married women. The Kilba dancers from the Adamawa area combined a group of young women whose skilful movements of the upper body where accompanied by beautiful playing of flutes by young men who danced as they played. The excellence and precision of their team work must have meant many hours of rehearsal.

Apart from the traditional performers there were lively groups of young acrobats who combined virtuoso physical technique with improvised dance. The most interesting were the Shehu Maigoge from Katsina, a group of young urban entertainers who performed with grace and wit to highlife-jazz music played on traditional instruments. The type of performance is consciously designed as entertainment and is completely contemporary though the performers may use traditional materials familiar to them as a contributing element to their presentation. This is an essentially different type of performance and should be clearly recognized as such by festival organizers and judges.

Due to a language barrier I could not fully appreciate the singers and the professional comics, but there were highly polished performances by professional comedians and some fine choral singing particularly from a male group headed by Mammam Shata: Halima and her accompanying singers and musicians are well-known performers from Bida and once more I enjoyed the skill and authority of her performance.

Drama groups performed at the British Council Theatre every evening of the festival. Fifteen groups had come together from various areas. They were urban amateur theatrical groups with a few dramatic societies from secondary schools. It was a delight to find that most of the groups had built their performance by improvising on local themes—social problems created by urbanization were well to the fore. The plays were mainly performed in Hausa with a vitality and conviction which more than compensated for any lack of formal theatrical finesse.

Congratulations are due to the organizing cultural officer, who has initiated and encouraged the development of much of the work in the short space of one year. And general congratulations are due to all those responsible for a most instructive and enjoyable week of the Northern Festival of the Arts.

IKAKI—THE TORTOISE MASQUERADE

By

ROBIN HORTON

ONE of the favourite protagonists of Kalabari stories is Ikaki—Tortoise. Often referred to as 'Old Man of the Forest,' Ikaki is a memorable character. On the one hand, he has an insatiable appetite for food, money and women, and seeks to gratify it without any regard for the limits set by established morality. On the other hand, he operates with a vast deviousness and an elaborate cunning. Fortunately for the rest of the characters in his stories, however, he often pushes his schemes too far, and so fails to achieve his outrageous aims.

At some time in the development of Kalabari culture, the story-image of Ikaki was taken up as the theme of a masquerade.[1] Quite how, when and where this happened, we shall probably never know for certain. Kalabari, it is true, give a clear-cut account of the matter; but their account smacks more of myth than of history. Mythical though it may be, however, the Kalabari account is of considerable importance for anyone who wants to discover the deeper meaning of the Ikaki play.

Kalabari believe that the Ikaki play was first produced in the long-defunct village of Oloma, in the creeks west of the mouth of the San Bartolomeo River. Ikaki, they say, was a spirit living in the forest at the back of the village—a kind of supernatural supertortoise.[2] Every now and again, Ikaki used to come out of the forest to dance; and whenever he did so, the villagers gathered round to watch him. They found his dancing splendid, and they always pestered him to come back some time and dance again. But each time he came, Ikaki warned them in song:

Ee, omini i ke kuruma, omini i ke kurumaye.
Al' Ikaki, Al' Ibulu.
O bara k'i lamama, o bara k'i lamamaye.
Al' Ikaki, Al' Ibulu.
('Remember my words, all of you; remember my words, all of you.
Chief Tortoise, Chief Grey-Hair.
Don't any of you touch me; don't any of you touch me.
Chief Tortoise, Chief Grey-Hair.')

But the Oloma people persisted in calling him back, until one day he came out with a finer dance than ever before. As he danced, he sang:

A nwe simeari piriogbo, a nwe simeari buogbo,
A Kula tubo sinyaa.
Kwe kwe kwe ikirioro, kiri kiri tominoruye.
Agemage.
Tomina nama krim, krim.
Agemage.
Tomina ingbe krim, krim.
('In the forest where I live, in the swamp where I live,
I don't call any child of Kula.
Kwe kwe kwe, etc.[1]
Agemage.
Human meat, yum, yum.
Agemage.
Human bones, yum, yum.')

As he danced, he lifted one leg, and all the people living in that direction died. He lifted the other leg, and all the people living that way died too.

[1] For a general description of the Kalabari masquerade and its institutional setting, *see* my 'Kalabari Ekine Society'; *Africa*, April, 1963.

[2] It is a little puzzling to find that in the context of story-telling Ikaki is regarded as a purely fictional character, whilst in the context of masquerade dancing he is regarded as a nature spirit (*owuamabo*). The explanation seems to be that the *ekine* masquerade society focussed from the beginning on plays representing the *owuamapu*. Hence any new play brought into the society, no matter what its actual inspiration, tended to acquire a mythical charter which brought it into line with the general schema of inspiration by contact with this class of spirits.

[1] My informants were unable to translate this, and treated it as water-spirit language unintelligible to men.

Ikaki (right), Nimite Poku (middle) and Nimiaa Poku (left) go down to the water-side on the first morning of the play

Then Ikaki vanished into the forest and was never seen again.

After a while, the few people who were left thought they would like to imitate Ikaki's wonderful dancing. But all were fearful when it came to the lifting of the masquerader's leg, for they thought that this would surely bring more deaths. So they went to ask the great oracle of Chuku what they should do. The oracle instructed them to make certain changes and to take certain precautions, and said that if they did these things, all would be well. Keeping carefully to the oracle's instructions, they began to put on the Ikaki play, and continued with it until their town was sacked in one of the many wars of the times. Before Oloma disappeared, the Kula people came to see the play and were much impressed. Having performed the appropriate rites, they took the play over for their own *ekine* society.[1] From Kula, Ikaki spread to other towns including New Calabar.

Of the three daughter settlements of New Calabar, it is Buguma that still keeps up its *ekine* society according to the ancient forms; and it is here that the Ikaki play is still to be seen when its turn comes round. Formally speaking, Ikaki is one of the plays owned corporately by the *ekine* society. But *de facto* responsibility for bringing it out has landed for the time being upon the heirs of the late Dokubo Cottrell Horsfall—a noted Ikaki dancer who is said to have learned how to play the main part in Kula.[2]

The Ikaki performance which I describe here took place at Buguma early in July 1966. For convenience, I couch my description in the present tense.

Ikaki begins in the usual manner of *ekine* plays. Society members assemble in the club-house on the night before the performance. The Master of the Drums beats out some of the Ikaki rhythms, and members have a desultory hour or two of

[1] Readers will have noticed that in Ikaki's second warning song, it is Kula and not Oloma that is mentioned. I suspect this is because Kula fits the tune better than Oloma.

[2] Although *ekine* society taboos debar me from mentioning the present Ikaki dancer by name, I should like to record my gratitude to him and his brother for their very helpful commentary on the play.

practice. (Those actually due to don masquerades have in fact been practising for the past few nights). Meanwhile, two or three people specially concerned with the play are at work putting the finishing touches to headpieces and costumes. Some time after midnight, most of the *ekine* members form up in procession and go round the town, singing the society's drinking songs, to give notice of the morrow's play. Those working on the headpieces stay behind to finish their job. When it is done, they offer a fowl to the spirit of the masquerade, with the usual invocation for the success of the play. In the small hours, everyone retires for a brief sleep.

Next morning, the Master of the Drums starts to play the characteristic rhythm known as Ikaki Ada. A crowd quickly gathers in the town square. Before long, Ikaki emerges from the society's club-house, flanked by two of his children; Nimite Poku—'Know All', and Nimiaa Poku—'Know Nothing'. Ikaki himself, though fairly simply dressed, is readily recognizable by his hunchback and by the schematized tortoise body which is his headpiece. He comes out with a canny, mincing step. Nimite Poku, dressed mainly in a soiled blue-and-white sheet topped with an old felt hat, follows his step with a paddle sloped over his shoulder. Nimiaa Poku, dressed if anything more shabbily than his brother, carries a paddle and an ancient, leaky basket. He gambols and tumbles round the other two, to their considerable annoyance.

Almost at once, Ikaki leads his children out of the town square and down to *owusera*, the main water-side. The crowd follows in high spirits. Ikaki is looking for a boat. There is no sign of one at *owusera*, so he doubles back to *oru poku*—'the beach of the gods,' and there finds what he is looking for. *Ekine* members present Ikaki with a drum, and help him and his children into a boat.

The Maskers embark

The Maskers in midstream. At the prow of the canoe, notice Nimiaa Poku paddling busily backward

With Ikaki at the stern and Nimite Poku amidships, the boat quickly reaches deep water. But no sooner is it well out into the river than Nimiaa Poku plunges the crew into confusion. Paddling almost as briskly backward as the others are paddling forward, he brings the boat to a shuddering standstill. The onlookers, crowded at the water's edge, abuse him joyously. Realizing something is wrong, he takes remedial action by bailing with his basket. Unfortunately, he bails water from the river into the boat. The leakiness of the basket averts the worst; but a considerable amount of water comes aboard nonetheless, and the boat starts to look a little low in the water. Nimite Poku jumps angrily on his brother, and both fall into the bottom of the boat. The audience roars ecstatically. Then Ikaki intervenes to pull the two brothers apart, and gives Nimiaa Poku a sharp cuff. Almost immediately, upset at having hurt his son, he starts to pet him. Eventually, everyone gets back into place. Nimiaa Poku continues to paddle in reverse. Nimite Poku paddles hopefully on in the right direction. Ikaki sits in the stern playing his drum, apparently attempting to urge his crew on after the fashion of a war-canoe orchestra. Caught in a strong ebb-tide, the boat is soon in danger of passing the last waterside and drifting away toward the sea. The onlookers start to shout warnings. Ikaki, dropping his drum, joins Nimite Poku with his paddle, and after a brief but valiant exertion, the two of them manage to bring the boat in to the very end of the last beach.

As soon as Ikaki and his children alight, *ekine* members surround them and lead them back up to the town square, where the more senior, older and less energetic spectators are waiting to greet them. The Master of the Drums has already started to beat Ikaki Ada. Ikaki and his children begin to dance round the square, whilst the *ekine* people form up in procession behind them. In the basic dance-sequence for Ikaki Ada, the dancer first takes four shuffling steps forward. Then he pivots on his left foot, raises the right, and hops four times in a quarter-circle to the left. He takes four more steps forward, then pivots on his right foot, raises the left, and hops four times in a quarter-circle to the right. This sequence commemorates Ikaki's death-dealing dance before the people of Oloma. Ikaki himself frequently breaks off from the basic step into a canny, mincing gait; whilst Nimiaa Poku tries to filch from his bag, then rolls over helplessly in his desire to get away. Nimite

practice. (Those actually due to don masquerades have in fact been practising for the past few nights). Meanwhile, two or three people specially concerned with the play are at work putting the finishing touches to headpieces and costumes. Some time after midnight, most of the *ekine* members form up in procession and go round the town, singing the society's drinking songs, to give notice of the morrow's play. Those working on the headpieces stay behind to finish their job. When it is done, they offer a fowl to the spirit of the masquerade, with the usual invocation for the success of the play. In the small hours, everyone retires for a brief sleep.

Next morning, the Master of the Drums starts to play the characteristic rhythm known as Ikaki Ada. A crowd quickly gathers in the town square. Before long, Ikaki emerges from the society's club-house, flanked by two of his children; Nimite Poku—'Know All', and Nimiaa Poku—'Know Nothing'. Ikaki himself, though fairly dressed, is readily recognizable by his hu[illegible] and by the schematized tortoise body whic[illegible] headpiece. He comes out with a canny, [illegible] step. Nimite Poku, dressed mainly in a[illegible] blue-and-white sheet topped with an old f[illegible] follows his step with a paddle sloped o[illegible] shoulder. Nimiaa Poku, dressed if anythin[illegible] shabbily than his brother, carries a paddle [illegible] ancient, leaky basket. He gambols and t[illegible] round the other two, to their considerable [illegible]ance.

Almost at once, Ikaki leads his children [illegible] the town square and down to *owusera*, the water-side. The crowd follows in high spirits[illegible] is looking for a boat. There is no sign of [illegible] *owusera*, so he doubles back to *oru poku*—'beach of the gods,' and there finds wha[illegible] looking for. *Ekine* members present Ikaki [illegible] drum, and help him and his children in[illegible]

The Maskers embark

...ound the arena with the hopping step that commemorates Ikaki's death-dealing dance before the people of Oloma. Note Ikaki's favourite son Kalagidi in the middle

Kiri sokua minji paka.
('Digs into the ground and comes up in the water.')
Ee! Iyeri–ee!
('Ee! It is me!')
: *Ere furubo, tanda bio, tanda bio.*
('Raper of women, hides in the corner, in the corner.')
...aki: *Oriaa–ee!*
('It is not him.')
...mmer: *Yingi mono, tubo mono.*
('Sleeps with his mother, sleeps with his daughter.')
Ikaki: *Atabila–ee! I furo pele!*
('Atabila! May your belly burst!')[1]

While Ikaki alternately tries to hoodwink the townspeople and takes to his bosom or hurls back the epithets of the drummer, Nimiaa Poku delights the audience at the other end of the arena, by his fatuous gambollings and helpless falls. After about an hour of this, the sun begins to get hot; the Drum Master gives gentle hints; the maskers retire to the club-house; and the onlookers go home for a meal and a siesta.

Toward the cool of the evening, the Drum Master sounds Ikaki Ada once again. Ikaki comes out, escorted by Nimite Poku and Nimiaa Poku. Nimiaa Poku tries pilfering from his father again and falls very seriously in trying to escape. The long-suffering Ikaki revives him.

Later, Ikaki is seen questing for various leaves. Then, after a little while, he is seen putting his head under various bushes in the arena. Here again, he is at one of the tricks familiar to onlookers from the world of story. As Old Man of the Forest, he is expected to take a solicitous interest in the other animals who dwell in his domain. Characteristically, however, he takes advantage of his position. He goes to the dwellings of animals whom he knows have stores of nuts or of meat, and warns them that he sees impending misfortune in their households. A little later, he comes back with a native doctor; and while the doctor is attending to the alleged troubles hinted at by Ikaki, the latter loots the food store. All we actually see in the play is the masker delving under bushes and backing out again furtively with a knapsack fuller than it

[1] The Atabila fish (*Tilapia nigra*) is said to be the drummer of the water-spirits.

was when he went in. But the onlookers, familiar with the story, 'fill in' the details they do not see and are highly amused.

After a while, the cast is swelled by two more characters—Ikaki's well dressed favourite son Kalagidi, and his wife Aboita. Kalagidi joins the other men, dancing with a more elegant, less mincing step than his father, but suffering the same indignities from the moronic Nimiaa Poku. Aboita dances with an escort of four elderly women. A loose, silly thing, she soon has a number of *ekine* members around her. Egged on by the audience, they flirt and pinch her tender parts. Eventually, Ikaki comes to claim her. He joins her in the suggestive pelvic dance known as *egepu*, whilst the Drum Master hurls out a torrent of admiring and abusive epithets. After a little of this, the whole family forms up at the head of the *ekine* people, and passes round the square in procession. It is now sundown and play closes for the day.

On the second day, as is usual with Kalabari masquerades, play does not begin till the cool of the afternoon. Ikaki, Nimite Poku, Nimiaa Poku, Kalagidi and Aboita all come out together. The dance continues to the beat of Ikaki Ada, with Ikaki still dirging hopefully for the dead king, and breaking off from time to time for an exchange of pleasantries and abuses with the Drum Master. Whilst Ikaki holds the attention of one section of the audience, Nimiaa Poku entertains another section with his witless frolics, and Aboita titillates yet another section with her equally witless flirtation.

The play closes with two *egberi* or dramatic episodes. First of these is *koro kpole egberi*—'Palm-tree climbing *egberi*'. For this, *ekine* members have erected a large, conical scaffold beside the drum house, with a bundle of fresh palm-leaves lashed to the top. Ikaki climbs up this stage palm-tree with a matchet, a small knife called *akpo*, and a large wine calabash. The *ekine* people mill around beneath him and encourage him with their cheers. The Drum Master steps up his mixture of praise and abuse. When Ikaki gets to the top of the tree,

The Master of the Drums playing Ikaki Ada on an ensemble of two slit-gongs and three skin-drums

Nimiaa Poku trying to pick his father's pocket while Nimite Poku looks on

he settles himself down, nods with self-satisfaction and breaks into one of his falsetto songs:

> *Ye, na na pu, na na pu.*
> *Ye, koro kpolebo fite-oo.*
> *Ye, na na pu, na na pu.*
> *Ye, koro kpolebo fite-oo nayee!*

('Ye, all who can hear, all who can hear.
The palm-tree climber used to die-o.
Ye, all who can hear, all who can hear.
The palm-tree climber used to die, hear me-ee!')

The Drum Master praises him;

Drummer:	*Jejekwu!* ('Big Chief!')
Ikaki:	*Ori!* ('It is him!')
Drummer:	*Or'inaa kini inaa.* ('What he cannot do, no-one can do')
Ikaki:	*Ori!* ('It is him!')

Ikaki, it seems, is the only one of the forest animals who has discovered how to climb the palm-tree; and he has no inhibitions about letting every-one know it.

As he sings, he sets to work not only cutting palm-fruit, but also tapping wine. He starts to suck the palm-fruit, and the sweetness of it moves him to another song:

> *Ya bele bele youruba.*
> *Bele bele, ye belebeleye.*
> *Bele bele youruba.*
> *Bele bele nwe beleye.*
> *Uguoguo!*

('Ya, lovely, lovely palm-fruits.[1]
Lovely, lovely, yum.
Lovely, lovely palm-fruits.
Lovely, lovely, yum.
Uguoguo!')

But whilst Ikaki is at the top of the tree, bliss-fully praising himself and extolling the virtues o palm-fruits, trouble is coming below. The witle Nimiaa Poku has got hold of an axe, and is amu-sing himself by trying to cut the tree down. Aboit silly as ever, is flirting with the *ekine* people, an so doesn't see what her son is up to. Kalag makes one or two attempts to stop Nimiaa Po

[1] *Youruba:* An unusual word for palm-fruit whic have not heard used outside this context.

but without effect. At last Ikaki looks down and sees what is happening. With an alarmed shriek, he throws his palm-cutting instrument at Nimiaa Poku. But it misses Nimiaa Poku and knocks out his beloved Kalagidi. Ikaki is beside himself. He says he will never come down again. He will hang himself in the tree. Then he starts to wail for his favourite son:

Ye, ee-ee ee-ee.
Ye, Kalagidi ofite oona!
Ye, ee-ee ee-ee ee-ee.
Ye, Kalagidi ofite oona-ee!
('Ye, ee-ee ee-ee.
Ye, Kalagidi is dead, hear me-o!
Ye, ee-ee ee-ee- ee-ee.
Ye, Kalagidi is dead, hear me-ee!')

While Ikaki wails at the top of the tree, Nimiaa Poku rejoices at his escape and dances happily about below. The feckless Aboita, delighted that her own favourite has escaped the blow aimed at him, joins him in the dance. Ikaki looks down, sees both his son and his wife rejoicing in the midst of his misfortune, and redoubles his threats to hang himself. Meanwhile, *ekine* members have gathered about the fallen Kalagidi and are making strenuous efforts to bring him to life. After some time, they succeed. Kalagidi gets up and starts to dance once more. Ikaki, seeing this, unties the rope with which he has started to hang himself, and comes slowly down the tree, grumbling about having a wife who could allow such things to happen:

Ye, ee–ee ee–ee.
Ye, ee–ee ee–ee.
Ye, si erebo keni bam, si erebo keni bam.
A fate-oo, Kalagidi.
('Ye, ee–ee ee–ee
Ye, ee–ee ee–ee ee.

Ikaki rounds on Nimiaa Poku

Ekine members flirting with Ikaki's wife

Ye, a bad wife kills a man, a bad wife kills a man.
I am finished-o, Kalagidi.')

When Ikaki reaches the ground, the *ekine* people cheer vigorously. The episode comes to an end with Ikaki and the *ekine* members dancing round the square in procession.

In the interlude between the first and second dramatic episodes, the Drum Master changes his beat from Ikaki Ada to Egepu:

> *Obuogbo kuogbo, gidipu; obuogbo kuogbo, gidipu.*
> ('Lump behind, lump between the legs, gidipu; lump behind, lump between the legs, gidipu.')

This beat alludes to the fact that Ikaki is not only a hunchback, but also suffers from elephantiasis of the scrotum—a disease usually regarded as the mark of an evil life. Pleased at the revival of his son, however, Ikaki takes the drummer's call as more of a salutation than an insult. He responds with a bawdy pelvic dance, taking out his enormous testicles (represented by a wooden slit-gong) and shaking them at the women. The latter retreat with shrieks of mock horror, followed by requests to see more.

After some minutes of this, the drum rhythm changes again, and the scene is set for the last episode. Looking for some way to celebrate his son's escape, Ikaki hits on the idea of taking the *peri* title by killing an elephant. To represent the elephant, *ekine* people put down a large section of banana stem with a cord attached to it. Ikaki takes out his matchet and brandishes it in front of the crowd. He is going to kill an elephant, he says. The crowd makes various incredulous noises. As he circles the field, the Drum Master beats the head-hunting rhythm:

> *Ikpalaga, ikpalaga; ikpalaga bara bara; ikpalaga peri.*

('A body, a body; a body with the strong arm, with the strong arm; a body for peri!')

Then Ikaki closes on the elephant. He circles it with elaborate guile, feints at it from behind, retreats hastily. He circles, feints, and falls on his back. He minces about wondering whether to go on or call the whole thing off. He brandishes his matchet to the crowd to show his determination. He circles and feints again. Then finally he closes in and finishes off the elephant with a tremendous blow on its neck. Roars from the men and delighted shrieks from the women. Ikaki picks up the severed head of the elephant and dances up to where the *amanyanabo* is sitting. The drummer showers praises on him: *Jejekwu! Orinaa, kini inaa! Kiri sokua minji paka!* He nods and pats his chest. As he parades before the king and his chiefs, his weapon shakes as befits a *peri* title holder—his arm moved by the spirits of departed *peri* men.

After a while, the Drum Master switches his beat once more to Ikaki Ada. Ikaki and his family form up at the head of the *ekine* members and make a final procession round the arena. As he goes round, Ikaki sings a triumphant falsetto:

Ye, ee–ee ee–ee.
Ye, Al'Ikaki o bila bat' oona.
Ye, na na pu, na na pu.
Ye, Al'Ikaki o bila bat'oona–ee!
('Ye, ee–ee ee–ee.
Ye, Chief Tortoise has killed an elephant, hear–o!
Ye, all who can hear, all who can hear,
Ye, Chief Tortoise has killed an elephant, hear–eee!')

When the procession reaches the *ekine* house, the players go inside to undress and drink, and the spectators disperse to their homes. The play is over.

The Ikaki play is definitely one of the lighter items in the *ekine* society's repertoire. As one of the performers told me: 'We put it on after the Igbo play to cool people down.'[1] At the same time, it is clearly a major attraction, for which fishermen in remote camps and salaried employees in Port Harcourt, Aba and Enugu make every effort to return. What is its special allure?

[1] For an account of the Igbo play, *see* my 'Igbo: An Ordeal for Aristocrats'; *Nigeria Magazine*, Vol. 90, September, 1966.

Ikaki visiting the burrows of the forest animals in search of loot

Ikaki dancer with Nimiaa Poku, whilst the Amanyanabo of Kalabari (back right) looks on from his seat beside the AMATEMESO *shrine of the town*

First, it is magnificent ballet—a wonderfully concentrated distillation, in the gestures of the dance, of a character whose portrayal is normally spread through a vast corpus of story. The distillation is made specially piquant by the presence of contrasting foils in the shapes of the silly Aboita and the moronic Nimiaa Poku.

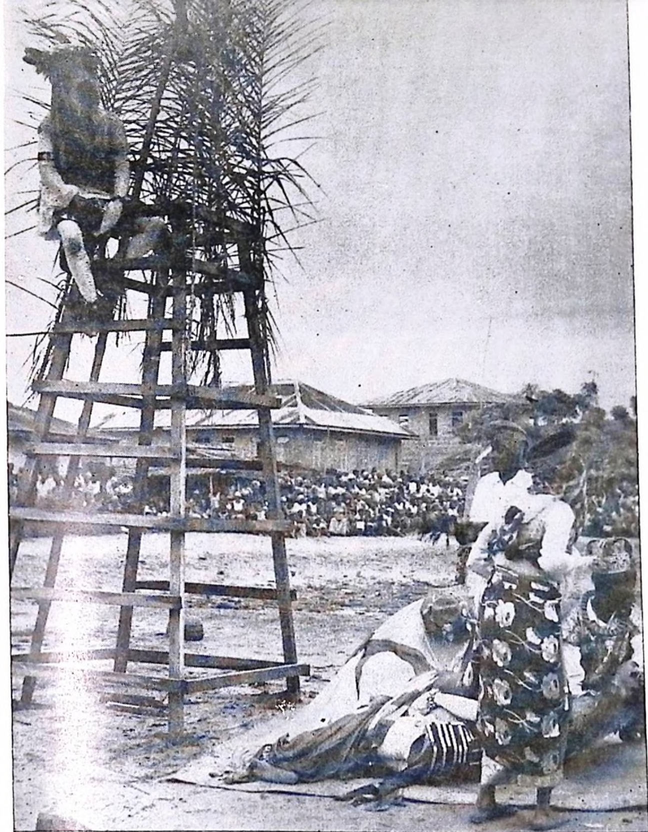
But I think Kalabari enthusiasm for this play has deeper roots. For some clue as to what these roots are, we must return to Kalabari ideas about the play's origin—ideas which I sketched at the beginning of this article. Kalabari, as you will recall, say they first encountered Ikaki as a fascinating but deadly spiritual being. Despite, or perhaps because of, his deadliness, they were determined to make their own imitation of him. Finally, as the result of precautions and modifications made at the instance of Suku they managed to produce an imitation devoid of the deadly properties of the original. In this sense, their playing of Ikaki was at the same time a taming of him.

This account of origins raises several intriguing questions. First, why should Kalabari believe that the prototype of this comic play is an essentially deadly force? The answer, I suggest, is not far to seek. For Ikaki is not only an animal or a nature spirit. In Kalabari metaphor, he is also a certain type of personality amply represented in present-day society. This is the amoral, psychopathic confidence trickster—the type who accepts society only in order to prey upon it. Kalabari have a very real fear of the human tortoise; so much so that they are reluctant to contract marriage alliances with certain Houses in which he is believed to abound. In the intelligent, plausible psychopath, that universal threat to the fabric of the community, we can surely see the source of the idea of Ikaki as the fascinating yet deadly Old Man of the Forest.

Given that the plausible psychopath provides the ultimate inspiration for the Ikaki play, in what sense can the play be said to tame him? Well, as an artistic performance, it puts him in a frame and imposes form on him. Again, by portraying him in animal guise, it 'distances' the audience from the particular human psychopaths that arouse

Ikaki looks down from the top of his palm-tree to see Nimiaa Poku trying to chop it down with an axe. On the right, Kalagidi protests without effect

Senior Ekine members resting in the club-house



Ekine members and maskers trying to revive Kalagidi after Ikaki has accidentally felled him with a knife aimed at Nimiaa Poku

their anxieties, and allows them to contemplate the type in tranquillity.[1] Finally, the play tames the disturbing experiences that inspire it by a subtle distortion of their content. The Ikaki of the play is as evil and as amoral as his real-life counterpart. The hopping dance which accompanies the Ada beat reminds us of his deadliness, and several of his drum-epithets remind us of his total lack of scruple. But his deviousness and his cunning are modified. For one thing, they are exaggerated and caricatured to the point of absurdity.

For another thing, they are portrayed as having limits that all too seldom restrict the human tortoises of everyday life. Clever and unscrupulous as he is, Ikaki of the play falls in love with a silly woman and marries her, then begets and adores a witless child. Between them, wife and child undo many of his bestlaid schemes. In the play, indeed, the 'undoing' of Aboita and Nimiaa Poku is as much in evidence as the 'doing' of Ikaki. In these various ways, then, the disturbing real-life experience of plausible psychopaths is controlled, confined, and cut down to size. People laugh from out of their depths at the ravening forest beast, because for once they have got him behind bars.

[1] For a discussion of spirit and animal figures as devices for attaining 'distance' in Kalabari art, *see* my 'Kalabari Ekine Society'; *Africa*, April, 1963.

ELECTRICITY CORPORATION OF NIGERIA

AFRICA'S FASTEST GROWING ELECTRICITY INDUSTRY

For all your information, Contact:

E.C.N. HEADQUARTERS,

24–25, MARINA,
P.M.B. 12030,
LAGOS.
TEL. 23431–9 LINES.

OR IN THE REGIONS:

THE AREA MANAGER,
AREA OFFICE,
KAHALE BUILDING,
AHMADU BELLO WAY,
P.M.B. 2108,
KADUNA.
PHONE 2172

THE AREA MANAGER,
AREA OFFICE,
E.C.N.,
16, OGUI COMM. ROAD,
P.M.B. 1019,
ENUGU.
PHONE 3661

THE AREA MANAGER,
AREA OFFICE,
E.C.N.,
P.M.B. 5110,
IBADAN.
PHONE 21098

Nigeria Magazine
Literary Supplement

THE SABON-GARI SYSTEM IN NORTHERN STATES OF NIGERIA

[illegible]

[illegible] a great [illegible] that this system, if [illegible] could be adapted very [illegible] government for the [illegible] Consequently, Lugard resorted to the [illegible] This system he afterwards [illegible] providing a rational basis for it. Arguing [illegible] system of administration, he stated:

> [illegible] British rule among primitive tribes, unaccompanied by any tax, may perhaps, if a fully adequate staff is provided, be the least troublesome, and temporarily at any rate the most efficient— [illegible] of thought.[1]

Lugard, however, unlike the reactionary political officers who worked with him and later succeeded him did not believe that the native institutions should be left unreplenished and unreformed. He believed that new ideas should be introduced and new institutions grafted to the old but in such a way that the old and the new could be blended perfectly together to provide a new synthesis. He would have agreed with Governor Hugh Clifford who stated that the duty of the political officers should be to influence 'these Medieval Administrations to accept standards of justice, of equity, of fair treatment of the weak and impotent, of financial responsibility and of honesty...'[2] In this respect, Lugard belonged to the Burkean School of thought—an enlightened conservative willing to preserve as well as to improve. Unfortunately, Lugard's disciples and successors particularly Girouard and Temple differed from

[1] Lugard, F. D., *The Dual Mandate in British Tropical Africa* Frank Cess and Co Ltd, 1965, pp. 219–220.

[2] *See* Address by His Excellency Governor Clifford at the Third Session of the Legislative Council held at Lagos on 6th February, 1925, p. 30.

this school of thought. They strongly believed that the native administrations should be preserved as living museums—interesting pageantry of the past. Under Percy Girouard, Indirect Rule, as Dr Ayandele observed, 'became a divine revelation, a sort of Natural Law, against which it would be dangerous to behave.'[1] Under this System: 'The customs and institutions of the people began to receive at first sympathy, then sentimentality and ultimately veneration and their exposure to and contact with the outside world began to be regretted.'[2] From Lugard's departure from Nigeria in 1906, every attempt was made to prevent the infiltration of Western ideas any further into Northern Nigeria. Western education, which Lugard fervently believed in as a means of ensuring progress, was frowned upon as it was rightly believed that it would destroy the native institutions which these overzealous Indirect Rulers so ardently wished to preserve. As C. L. Temple put it: 'The policy (Indirect Rule) I have outlined certainly does not admit the institution of schools where young natives are to be taught to read and write in English, and, as a natural corollary, European habits and customs because practically every young native who has passed through a school is divorced from his people.'[3] Their attitude was the product of a theory that 'the first duty of a political officer is to keep Native Administrations unspotted from the world and to shield and protect them from all subversive outside influences; and that the maintenance of Native Administrations is the primary necessity—an end in itself; the ideal that efficiency of administration, and the good government which it implies, are matters of even greater moment being frankly discarded as impertinent to the situation.'[4]

However, since the territory was now under the Pax Britannica, it was difficult to keep it completely isolated from the outside world. Missionaries anxious to bring the good tidings to the 'unbelievers' saw a new vista of opportunity before them. They actively began to move in to intensify their work of proselytization.

[1] E. A. Ayandele, 'The Missionary Factor in Northern Nigeria', 1870–1918 in *Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria*, Vol. 3 No.3, December 1966. p.516.

[2] *Loc cit.*

[3] C. L. Temple, *Native Races and Their Rulers*, Capetown, Argus Printing and Publishing Co Ltd, 1918, p. 219.

[4] *See* 1925 Address by *op. cit.*, p. 29.

Traders saw in the order now established a new frontier of opportunity and began pouring in to reap the supposed potential economic wealth. This moving frontier of civilization if not checked early would obviously undermine if not destroy altogether the Indirect Rule System. Something urgent and drastic had to be done to stem the inrush of Western forces.

With regard to the missionaries, most of whom were Europeans, the fears of the Administration was that their presence would lower what was generally referred to as the 'prestige of the white man' and 'would imbue the guileless native of the North with subversive ideas; would teach him to forget to pay to Europeans those outward signs of respect which custom and his own sense of courtesy and good manners require and would proportionately lower the authority and diminish the influence of the political officers.'[1] They were desirous of preventing this. This is because they were very few in number and could, therefore, be easily overwhelmed by the Northerners if provoked unduly. It was their firm belief that success in administering the territory derived from the respect and honour with which they were treated by the Northerners and nothing should be done to undermine this. They were right in this, as the 'white man's prestige' derived essentially from the ignorance of the whites by Africans. And since this prestige was based on ignorance there was no doubt that the presence of the missionaries would have undermined this prestige. This is because the missionaries lived close to the common people and this closeness provided an excellent opportunity for greater and better understanding of the whites. And the Africans on closer contact realized that the white man was not in any basic way different from himself; that he was subject to the same emotions and desires and that each individual white man could be paralleled in his own society. Also missionaries did not regard themselves as preachers of the gospel alone but also as a watch-dog of British colonial interest. They were, therefore, very vigilant in detecting and reporting whatever practices on the part of political officers which they believed contrary to justice and humanity and to the accepted canons of British colonial rule. In addition, the doctrine of equality preached by the missionaries was distasteful to the colonial administrators, who believed that this would not only destroy the respect of the masses for

[1] *Ibid.* p. 28.

their rulers but also for themselves and imbue the people with subversive ideas. Finally, as the missionaries were closer to the people than the administrators they (the administrators) feared that this would involve a loss of their influence over the people. However, the missionaries (Salisbury Square) being powerful and influential with the Imperial Government, there was little the administrators could do to prevent them from operating in Northern Nigeria.

But the Indirect Rulers were resourceful men and decided to achieve their aim even though in a limited way by some device. If nothing could be done to prevent the missionaries from operating in the North, something, at least, could be done to reduce drastically their area of operation. The administrators now took shelter under the Treaty signed by Lugard with the Sultan of Sokoto in which he promised to guarantee the Northerners their religion. This was wrongly interpreted by the political officers as banning the missionaries from the Muslim area of the North, an interpretation Lugard disagreed with. The Treaty did not ban the missionaries from the North. What the Treaty promised was non-interference with the Muslim religion in the sense that the Muslims would not be forced to be converted to Christianity.[1] However, this clause of the Treaty was utilized to restrict missionary activities, particularly in the Muslim area of Northern Nigeria. This did not, however, solve their problem of preventing Western ideas entering into the territory. The clause could be invoked to ban missionaries from Muslim areas but could not be employed to ban traders from the areas and, yet, traders are as much bearers of Western ideas and culture just as much as the missionaries. While the missionaries catered for the spiritual needs of man the traders looked after his material needs. Sometimes traders even achieved quicker and greater results than the missionaries by stimulating irresistible wants. Most of the traders pouring into the North were Saros (Sierra Leoneans) and Southern Nigerians whose presence in the North were particularly irritating to the Northern political officers. There was the fear that they might disturb the 'harmonious' relationship then existing between the Northern Nigerians and the British political officers. There was also a jealous dread that their presence might lead to the destruction of the Indirect Rule System as they would imbue the 'guileless' Northern Nigerians with what they considered the ill-digested ideas of liberty and justice imbibed from the mushroom mission schools in Sierra Leone and Southern Nigeria.

Moreover, most of them were Christians, and the political officers were afraid that to allow them to live side by side and thereby mix freely with the Muslims of the North might lead to disturbances and might make the administration of the territory very difficult. It was also believed that their presence might endanger the Islamic culture of the North to which many of them were sentimentally attached. This fear was completely unfounded. This is because the Northern Muslims possessed extreme pride in their culture and were not in any way afraid of its giving way to any other culture on contact. So confident were they that they were ready to invite Christian missionaries to their areas to impact to them Western education. Thus in 1883, Maliki, the new Emir of Bida, renewed an appeal by his predecessor to the C.M.S. to start work in his capital and the Emir of Nassarawa sent a personal letter to the Bishop to open a station in Loko.[1] Also during Lugard's administration Christian missions established stations in Wase Bida, Zaria, with the consent of the Emirs and received invitations to do the same from Kontagora, Kano and Katsina.[2] As a matter of fact the Northern Muslims possessed contempt for the Christians who were regarded as unbelievers. Moreover, the Southern Nigerians and Sierra Leoneans were themselves not in a position to impose their culture on the Northern Muslims. This is because they themselves were products of two cultures—African and Western—which are sometimes incompatible and being between and betwixt two cultures their attachment to either was not strong

[1] Dr R. A. Ayandele who has given much thought to this question has this to say: 'Lugard's so-called pledge must not be interpreted in the contractual sense, as if it was a contract signed between the Government on the one hand and the Emirs on the other, as the condition of acceptance of Britain's sovereignty by the Emirs. All that Lugard said in Sokoto in 1903 was that the British Administration would not interfere with Islam. This meant that Muslims would not be forced to accept Christianity; it did not imply that Missionaries, in their capacity as Christian teachers and British subjects, would not be allowed liberty to operate in Muslim districts.' *See* Ayandele, *op. cit.*, p. 515.

[1] E. A. Ayandele, *op. cit.*, p. 506.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 515.

enough for them to impose it on others. And in any case, they were more interested in their trade than as agents of their own culture. Indeed, the prospect for Christianity in the Muslim area of Nigeria was very dim. Rev W. Miller, the famous C.M.S. Missionary of Hausaland, stated in 1902 that Northern Nigeria 'forms one of the darkest problems for missionary work and I see no light.'[1] Even at the eve of his death fifty-one years later he admitted that Christianity would never convert Islam in Northern Nigeria and consoled himself with the hope that the destiny of that territory would in future be in the hands of Christianized well-educated 'pagans' of the Middle Belt.[2]

However, so sentimental were the political officers about the Northern culture that they failed to realize this. They believed that something had to be done quickly to prevent the destruction of the Northern culture by the Sierra Leoneans, Southern Nigerians and the missionaries.

An expedient which was to be a great source of trouble in the future was hit upon by C. L. Temple—'a man who interpreted the Muslim religion more rigidly than the Emirs.'[3] Temple decided that the best thing to do was to segregate Africans of non-Northern origin in a special location. It was this decision that brought into existence the Sabon-Gari System in the Muslim areas of Northern Nigeria and gave rise to the pattern of settlement peculiar to the Hausa/Fulani towns whereby three distinct areas of the town are noticeable—the City which is the ancient town, the Tudun Wada reserved for Northerners not indigenous to the particular town and the Sabon-Gari (new towns) reserved for non-Northerners.

This segregation of non-Northerners into a separate location did not even satisfy the Indirect Rulers who, if given a free hand, would have preferred excluding non-Northerners altogether from the North. This much was revealed in an address by Governor Hugh Clifford to the Nigerian Legislative Council in 1920. Clifford, who was opposed to the Sabon-Gari System and to the reactionary attitude of the political officers, stated:

> The fact really was, as I did not really fail presently to detect, that the very existence of a township and of a location inhabited by Africans who did not belong to the Northern Provinces, was a modern innovation which many of the political officers of those Provinces were inclined to regard with disfavour. Those things represented an alien encroachment upon a domain in which the political officer had been supreme until those disturbing elements obtruded themselves upon his peace. They were calculated to 'upset' and to demoralize the Native Administrations.[1]

Their attitude was that if the system had to exist it should as far as possible be ignored. This attitude led to lack of proper control of the development of the Sabon-Gari System and particularly, the relations between its inhabitants and the Hausas of the City.

It was thus extreme paternalism and excessive fear of the penetration of Western ideas into Northern Nigeria that led the colonial administration to create a specially reserved quarter for the Southerners in the North. Without their doing so, such an area inhabited by non-Northerners would have emerged spontaneously owing to the natural tendency on the part of men to come together with the people they know rather than with strangers. This pattern of settlement whereby strangers to a town lived in special areas all by themselves is typical of many African towns. For instance, every Ghanaian town of any size has its zongo, where African strangers live.[2] In the Southern Nigerian towns, such areas sprang up naturally although later the native administrations influenced by the colonial administration had to come in and reserve special areas though for reasons different from those behind the creation of the Northern Sabon-Gari. Factors such as convenience, sanitation and the need for town planning played the most important role. For instance, the creation of the Sabon-Gari in Ibadan was dictated by these factors. The Hausas were moved from where they originally settled in Ibadan (Oja'ba) to the present area they occupy because as many of them were cattlemen the new location was closer to their cattleyard at

[1] C.M.S. G3/AG/01 Miller to Baylis 22-1-1902. Cited in Ayandele, *op. cit.*, p. 519.

[2] W. Miller, *An Autobiography*, Zaria, 1953, p. 24. *See* also Ayandele, *op. cit.*, p. 519.

[3] Ayandele, *op. cit.*, p. 517.

[1] *See* Address by His Excellency Governor Clifford, *op. cit.*, p. 28.

[2] R. W. Steel, 'The Towns of Tropical Africa' in K. M. Barbour, R. M. Prothero (ed.) *Essays on African Population*, London, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1961, p. 273.

Mokola.[1] Also on their first arrival in Ibadan they set up temporary, insanitary camps of grass huts which did not blend with the surrounding and at the same time created sanitary problems for the town. It was this that led the colonial administration to influence the Ibadan Native Council to grant land to the 'stranger' elements. The construction of the first planned settlement was started in 1917 and completed in 1920.[2]

It must be pointed out, however, that this pattern of settlement was not enforced at all in the South as in the North and is rapidly breaking down. Social status and wealth rather than tribal origin are now important factors in determining the residence of each individual.

The question may now be asked as to the role of the Sabon-Gari in the relations between the stranger elements and the indigenes. Interestingly enough it produced unfortunate consequences in the North[3] while in the South it played little or no role at all in the relationship between the Northerners and the people in the midst of whom they lived. The results in the North were many and unfortunate. First, because of the rigidity with which it was enforced in that Region it created a feeling on the part of Southerners living in the North that they were not wanted but only tolerated. Consequently, they did not bother to identify themselves with the territory. Their efforts were, therefore, concentrated on making money which was to be sent home for the development of their villages and towns. It is therefore not surprising that a recent publication by the Current Issues Society of Northern Nigeria stated this in respect of the Ibos who constituted by far the majority of Southerners in the North: 'For their part, the Ibos lived like an island in the sea of others not allowing themselves to be influenced by the cultures of those around them and lived a life directed by the caucus of Ibo State Union.... In the North, they refused to identify themselves with members of the society in which they lived. A research carried out last year in the North showed that less than two per cent of Ibos that had lived in the North for twenty years and over could tell how a Hausa marriage or Igala naming ceremony was conducted.'[1] Though this publication seemed to put the blame for this extraordinary behaviour altogether on the clannish tendency of the Ibos, there is no doubt that the separation of Northerners and Southerners into rigid separate locations contributed its own quota to the situation. There is no doubt that had there been no restriction on mixing brought along by the Sabon-Gari System, the tendency of the Ibos in this respect might have been mellowed down. This lack of opportunity to meet and mix freely prevented a closer knowledge of each other. The result is that the stereotyped image of each other persisted even though this did not fit the individuals that were well-known to each other. A survey conducted in Zaria in 1965 by the present writer confirmed this view. The average Southerner living in Sabon-Gari believed the Northerners to be courteous and good mannered but lazy and unprogressive, while the average Northerners looked upon the Southerners, particularly the Ibos, as dynamic but grasping and dishonest.

Secondly, the isolation of the Northerners from the Southerners who were the traders and skilled workers of the North prevented the Northerners from rapid exposure to the new economic and social order and to this dynamic group. This is unfortunate as it held back the material progress of the North. The Southerners seized the opportunity created by the lack of participation of Northerners in the new order.[2] They became

[1] R. A. Akinola, Ibadan; A study in Urban Geography, London Ph.D. Theses, 1963, p. 90.

[2] N. C. Mitchell, '*Yoruba Towns*' in Barbour and Prothero, *op. cit.*, p. 296.

[3] This result has been foreseen by Chief Obafemi Awolowo as far back as 1947 when he stated: 'Southerners who go to the North to work or trade have to be segregated, whereas Hausas are free to mix as much as they wish in the South. The seed for a future minority problem in the North has been sown by the Government. It will grow with growing political consciousness on the part of those who settle permanently in the North. When the bitter harvest comes to be reaped, as surely it must, unless the present policy is changed, the British Government should bear the blame.' O. Awolowo, *Path to Nigerian Freedom*, Faber and Faber Ltd, 1947, p. 52.

[1] Current Issues Society, *The Nigerian Situation: Facts and Background*, Zaria Gaskiya Corporation, 1966.

[2] The inability of the Hausas to participate in the new economic order has been decried as far back as 1938 by Rev W. Miller. Miller believed that this inability was due to lack of imagination and patriotism which made them indifferent to the monopoly of trade and administration of their fatherland by the Yoruba and Saros. *See* W. Miller, *Yesterday and Tomorrow in Northern Nigeria* London 1938, p. 84. Cited in E. A. Ayandele, *op. cit.*, pp. 512–513.

the entrepreneurs and skilled artisans of the Northern Society. Many of them like their business counterparts elsewhere engaged in sharp practices which often put the 'innocent' Northerners at their mercy. This did not endear them to the Northerners. They also supplied until 1950s the junior grade of workers required by the colonial administration in the North. This was a cause of resentment on the part of the Northerners:

> . . . Southerners will take the places of Europeans but, undoubtedly, it is the Southerner who has power in the North. They have control of the railway station; of the post offices; of the Government hospitals; of the canteens; the majority employed in the Kaduna Secretariat are all Southerners; in all different Departments of Government it is the Southerner who has power.[1]

Moreover, the fact that many Southerners were thriving in the North while majority of Northerners were sunk in poverty raised a great deal of hatred for the Southerners. On the other hand, the Southerners seeing themselves thriving in the North while the average Northerner was either incapable because of his lack of Western education or showed a disinclination to catch up with them, developed an arrogant attitude towards the North and though they might treat individual Hausas with courtesy and decency, nevertheless, their attitude towards the Northerners as a whole was one of contempt. Thirdly, the protection of Northerners from the inevitable incursion of Western ideas and influence delayed not only the economic progress of the Region but also the social and political developments and created, until the post-independence period when by sheer number that Region came to control the government of the country, the fear of Southern domination.

In contrast to the Northern situation where so much resentment was generated against the Southerners, there was little or no resentment on the part of the Southerners to the Northerners in their midst. The explanation is not far to seek.

It has already been mentioned that the Northerners, partly owing to their being sheltered from the impact of Western ideas and influence and partly to the Muslim religion which was more resistant to the encroachment of such ideas and which made its devotees less materialistic than the Christians, were not in a position until recently (and even then their participation is still limited) to take part in any substantial way in the new economic and social order which came into existence with the establishment of British rule in the country; that consequently Southerners who moved to the North and who had been subjected to Western influence extensively and proved very receptive to it seized the initiative and filled the vacuum created. It has also been mentioned that the Southerners in the North became the entrepreneurs and some engaged in sharp practices to the disadvantage of the Northerners. Consequently they were resented and disliked. Parallel or comparable situation did not develop in the South.

In the South though some of the Northerners were successful they were never an economic threat to the people amongst whom they lived. This is because the Southerners were better educated and more progressive than the Northerners in their midst. Consequently, the Northerners only played a minor role in the economic life of the South and were almost non-existent in the Southern civil service. Also the South, particularly the West, was more urbanized than the North and as such the stranger elements constituted only a small portion of the population. There was thus no cause of friction at least in the economic-sphere between the Southerners and the 'strangers' in their midst. Attitudes of the Southerners to the inhabitants of Sabon-Gari, therefore, range from one of indifference to one of active interest.

* * * * * * * * * *

Lord Hailey once wrote: 'The urban resident has moved from a world where ties are largely personal to one in which obligations are to an increasing extent impersonal'.[1]

He believed that this inevitably leads to the breakdown of clannish or tribal loyalties. This would only hold good where the pattern of settlement does not evolve along tribal lines and where the groups coming together are roughly at the same level of development. A multi-nucleated pattern of settlement as existed in the North where one group was more advanced than the other does not seem to fulfil this function. It is difficult tc

---

[1] Government of Nigeria, *Report on Kano Disturbances*, Government Printer, 1943, p. 43.

[1] Lord Hailey, African Survey: a study of Problem Arising in Africa South of the Sahara, London 1957, p. 564. *See* also R. W. Steel, *op. cit.*, p. 274.

say whether this pattern would survive in Nigeria because of the recent crisis. Whatever happens, it is necessary to emphasize that solution to the problems of Nigeria or any other multi-tribal states must devote attention not only to the forms of government but also to the relations between the various groups that constitute the State.

'For forms of Government let fools contest;
Whatever is best administered is the best.'

BEN OSAWE:

A MODERN NIGERIAN SCULPTOR

By

PAULA BEN AMOS

ONE of the main problems facing Nigerian sculptors is to define themselves artistically and socially. There are at least three possible directions an artist can follow: first, to work within the traditional system, adopting and modifying new techniques and forms so that they are compatible with the traditional ones; second, to opt completely for European forms, whether representational or abstract; third, to attempt to create a synthesis of Western trends and traditional values and by this means to produce a typically Nigerian modern art form. The basic problem of the second approach is how to make modern forms that may or may not be African, while that of the third approach is how to make African forms that are completely modern.

While the first group of artists maintains to a large extent its traditional role, the second and third face problems in defining themselves as artists in the contemporary Nigerian scene. In effect, tradition and modernity in Nigeria stand for opposing relations between the artists and their society. According to traditional values, the wood-carvers and brass-casters should strive to satisfy their patrons, even if the taste of the latter is changing. In terms of modern attitudes, the artist should have a complete disregard for his public and concern himself only with his own imagination. Hopefully, his patrons will eventually give up their conventional taste for his whimsical innovations. The problem of Nigerian artists, then, is not only one of dealing with modern forms but also of establishing their role in the society as individualistic artists. Ben Osawe is no exception. Indeed, his case is an excellent example of this dilemma, particularly since he has just returned from England where he spent ten important years of his life.

Originally, Ben is from the Mid-West. He was born in 1931 in Agbor, forty-four miles east of Benin City. His father was a carver who learnt his craft while he served as an *omada*, an attendant of the *Oba*. Upon release from service, Ben's father moved to Onitsha where he continued to carve for some time, making panels for sale to Europeans. Like other Bini boys, Ben used to spend long hours watching his father at work. However, his father forbade him to carve for he wanted his son to have a more respected profession, such as law. Ben was forced to carve secretly, and the first time he was able to work in the open was in elementary school. The headmaster, an amateur painter himself, encouraged Ben to carve and to paint. Once started, Ben began to work in various media, doing mainly what he thought to be exemplary European art: portraits and landscapes, decorative roses and other flowery arrangements. In 1946, he moved to Benin, and after the death of his father in 1947, he was forced to apply his skill to more practical ends—the production of rubber stamps and ebony figurines. Up to this point, Ben fitted very well into the pattern of many carvers in Benin today. But he was more fortunate than most, for in 1956 he left for England, supported by an English patron, Major B. F. H. Grimley, D.S.O., who perceived his great talent in spite of the work he was doing at that time. In England, Ben studied at the Camberwell's School of Art in London. The

first months were difficult; the new environment, tools and forms were perplexing and challenging at the same time. In his first encounter with abstract art, Ben resented it, thinking it to be phony and pretentious. Two years passed before he could fully appreciate it. But as soon as he could command these novel visual forms, Ben began to develop as an artist.

While in England, Ben achieved a modest success as a young sculptor. He participated in several group shows, among them exhibitions in the Picadilly Gallery, London, in 1960, in the Artists International Association Gallery, London, in 1962, in the Royal Scottish Museum, Edinburgh (Exhibition of Nigerian Art) in 1963 and in the Commonwealth Art Festival in 1965. Although none of these were one-man shows, reviewers discussed Ben's work extensively and enthusiastically.

After ten years abroad, Ben returned to Benin City. The encounter with his home town was somewhat of a cultural shock. He left the City as an adolescent boy and returned as a mature artist. After an initial period in which he reached an artistic standstill, Ben began to sculpt and to experiment with a different medium. While in England, he had worked primarily in bronze and plaster, but the natural environment around Benin provided him with ample supplies of wood, particularly ebony. Within six months he had created more than fifteen pieces of different sizes, a sufficient number for a one-man show, which was held in the Exhibition Centre, Lagos, and the Mbari House in Ibadan.

In Nigeria Ben is faced with the problem of establishing himself socially and artistically. He identifies himself with the role of the artist as he experienced it in England. Thus, he insists on an individualistic attitude to his art and wants to isolate himself from economic motivations while working on new pieces. The abstract forms he produces create a further problem. People invariably ask him for clues to establish the connection between the sculptures he makes and the natural forms they know. However, this kind of question actually misses the point of Ben's work as he sees it. While the similarities between the natural shape and the artistic object had an autonomous aesthetic value for the traditional carvers in Benin City, formal novelty is the basis for the work of the modern artist. The sculptures Ben makes existed previously only in his imagination. True, like every other artist, Ben does not work in a visual vacuum. His sculpture is composed of geometric shapes and natural forms. For example, at the time we met him, he was fascinated by the shapes of birds. A photographic album of birds was in his room and he looked at it often. However, it would be wrong to assume that Ben tried to carve figures that would approximate the forms of the birds in this album. He only utilizes the shape of birds as well as those of triangles, quadrangles and circles to create a new formal entity in which surfaces, textures and shapes relate to each other in terms of balance and contrast. For Ben, the work on a new sculpture amounts to an intuitive combination of the expression of emotion and the exercise of intellect through which he arrives at an aesthetic solution to the creation of new forms.

The Nigerian intellectual circles, who are in the best position to appreciate abstract art, make another demand on Ben. They want him to be a Nigerian artist, to synthesize traditional and modern forms in his work and to express in that way the spirit of modern Nigeria. However, according to Ben, the whole concept of a Nigerian artist is false from an aesthetic point of view. It provides just a geographical, national and cultural designation for the artistic activity, but by no means does it supply any aesthetic framework for art. He will be the first to admit that he sculpts the way he does because of his Bini background, but he will immediately add other factors, like his individual psychological make-up, his professional training, and various accidental influences, all combined and none excluded. Consequently, if Ben reaches any synthesis at all between modern artistic trends and traditional aesthetic values, he achieves it intuitively, without any self-consciousness. Ben feels very strongly that the more minute an artist tries consciously to be Nigerian or to make deliberate concessions to his own traditional culture or the new middle-class clientele, he endangers his existence as an artist.

As far as his own culture is concerned, Ben himself has had only a limited contact with the great art of Benin. Nowadays, the main works for which Benin is famous are found in international museums and not in the local ancestors, shrines where they belong. Thus, Ben learned about the artistic heritage of his own culture through art books and visits to European museums. Through the same media he learned about modern art in

general, as well as the traditional art of other Nigerian tribes. Therefore, when it is possible to trace 'Africanism' in his work, it is not necessarily a result of contact with Bini or any Nigerian art tradition. In fact some of his sculptures have greater similarities to Congolese masks than with any local work. In other cases, the African influence on Ben is indirect, *via* modern European artists who have been influenced by Negro art works. The impact of the African elements in modern European art upon Ben and other young artists in Nigeria suggests that the relationships between the African and European art traditions have made a full circle. At the beginning of the twentieth century, Africa affected European artists and now the modern art which developed partially through that contact is having its own impact upon the new generation of artists in Nigeria.

IKPONMWOSA OSEMWEGIE:

A YOUNG BINI POET

By

DAN BEN AMOS

NIGERIAN English literature no longer needs apologists. In the last few years, it has achieved international prominence and appears regularly in major literary magazines and university curricula both in Nigeria and abroad. At the same time, vernacular literature is the concern of language specialists and a handful of enthusiasts who are interested in the revival and preservation of their ethnic traditions. Because circulation of their work is limited to the regional educated elite, vernacular authors can not hope to attain the national and international reputation of the Nigerian writers in English. However, their works are not necessarily of a lesser literary significance. Rather, since they write in the local language, they are able to incorporate traditional metaphors, forms and themes into their poems, short stories and dramas and thus establish a continuity with their own oral literature.

One of these vernacular writers is Ikponmwosa Osemwegie, whose book *Poems in Bini* was recently published (London: Macmillan, 1965). As a matter of fact, he is the first Bini author whose book has been put into print by a major publisher. Previously, Bini writers circulated their poetry, dramas and short stories on mimeographed sheets or, if financially able, published them with a local printer. Others appended their stories to grammar school text-books. We should not, by any means, underestimate this local literature, which undoubtedly exists in many Nigerian towns. It serves as an avenue for the literary ambitions of the local intelligentsia and constitutes a cultural milieu for writers who may eventually achieve national prominence. In addition, these aspiring amateur writers are the immediate and sometimes the only readers of the vernacular authors, and hence their verbal comments serve in lieu of published literary criticism. To a certain extent, Osemwegie developed into a poet within the cultural climate established by these creative teachers and civil servants in Benin City. He himself published a few versified plays in mimeographed form and produced and directed them with a local amateur group.

His book contains twenty-five poems written over the period of the last few years. Osemwegie divided the book into five sections: Narratives, Praise and Prayer,

storical, Philosophical and Miscellaneous Poems. The first group consists only of two short poems about imaginary episodes. *Ogolo n'Arhuaro* is a description of a blind man and *Ogbo O Yemwen se Ologbo* is a comparison between a house cat and a bush cat within a semi-narrative context. While these narratives follow Western poetic form, the Praise and Prayer Poems have an equivalent in the traditional genre of *Egbo* songs which Bini women sing in praise of the *Oba*, high deities or chiefs. Yet Osemwegie has recast this traditional poetic genre into the Western stanzaic form. The first of these poems, *N'Iso n'Oro*, is in praise of the royal appearance and great tolerance of *Oba* Akenzua II. *Ebo No Hon Edo*, the second praise poem, is dedicated, curiously enough, to Roger W. Wescott, an American linguist who learned Bini and actually wrote a two-volume grammar of this language. 'Who taught you to speak Bini so well?' Osemwegie asks in surprise, expressing the general disbelief of the Binis that a European can learn their language. Being a poet, he himself has an almost obsessive interest in language. He asks older people for archaic idioms and proverbs and then incorporates them in his daily conversation and poetic writings.

Tradition also serves as the main substance of the historical poems, which refer to tales of past *obas* and their inter- and intra-tribal wars. These narratives constitute the actual history of this ancient kingdom and the Binis would not doubt their validity. When recited by the native storyteller, these tales parallel in their literary nature and magnitude the great oral epics of the Western and Eastern peoples. Osemwegie takes these heroic themes and refashions them in European poetic form. For example, *Erio Gha Ye: 'Ozolua'* is about the war between *Oba* Ozolua and the warrior Elekighidi, who was known for his powerful protective charms. Ozolua could not defeat Elekighidi at first, and therefore asked Eyowo, Elekighidi's wife, to show him her husband's protective charms in return for making her his wife. She agreed to betray Elekighidi and consequently the *Oba* won the battle and fulfilled his promise. However, three years later, Ozolua killed Eyowo, fearing she might betray him as well.

While *Erio Gha Ye: 'Ozolua'* is about an intra-tribal struggle, the poem *Oro* is the narrative of the war between the Bini and the Idah peoples. Perhaps the French saying *cherchez la femme* can best epitomize this story. Chief Oliha used to boast about the faithfulness of his beautiful wife Imaguero, but *Oba* Esigie kept insisting that all women are untrustworthy and that Imaguero was no exception. To prove his point, *Oba* Esigie gave one of his porters coral beads to use in the seduction of Oliha's wife. The plot succeeded, and when the adultery of Imaguero became publicly known, Oliha executed her. In revenge on the king, Oliha sent a false message to the ruler of Idah that the Binis were preparing a war against him. As he hoped, the king of Idah attacked the unsuspecting Binis. However, the Binis protected their city heroically, and repulsed their enemies. Yet, in the midst of their pursuit, the prophetic bird *ahinamwen* cried out *oya o oya o*, which means: 'danger ahead.' Hearing this cry the Bini soldiers began to retreat. At that moment, the Portuguese soldiers who participated in the battle shot the bird and the Binis continued the war to a final victory.

Osemwegie does not depart from indigenous Bini tradition even in his lyrical or philosophical poetry. These personal meditations upon life and death are well anchored in Bini beliefs and world view. *Ovbe n'Ovbiye Uwu*, Sleep—the Sister of Death, for example, centres upon a universal belief which is also part of Bini tradition. In another lyrical poem *Ite Ota*, Evening in the Cemetery, Osemwegie tells us about a traditional funeral procession, which he witnessed in the cemetery at twilight. The melancholic mood of the scene invoked in him thoughts about life, fate, death and the hereafter. This is one of Osemwegie's favourite poems.

Thematically, Osemwegie combines modern subject matter and personal feelings with his cultural heritage. He writes about an American linguist, but employs an old Bini genre; he expresses his own emotions but imbues them with traditional beliefs. Formalistically, however, Osemwegie has taken over European literary patterns completely. He uses mainly quatrain and sestet stanzaic forms, imposing upon the Bini language European poetic patterns like the iambic verse and *abab* rhythmic scheme. Perhaps a more challenging course would have been to explore the poetic devices employed in Bini indigenous songs, to find out their instrinsic qualities and to utilize them in writing poetry which is thematically modern. In that way, Osemwegie might develop a more flexible poetic style which, at the same time, would come closer to the current trends in poetry which have abandoned the

rigidity of the stanzaic form. Moreover, in that way he would be writing really Bini modern poetry and not merely adopting foreign forms.

The problems Osemwegie faces as a vernacular writer have some bearing upon Nigerian literature in general and upon the relations between traditional themes and forms in particular. In a recent essay, Michael Crowder states that 'there is no readily apparent continuity between the creative writings of modern Nigerian authors and the traditional literature of Nigeria.... Indeed, one is tempted to believe that the two are of a totally different nature and that any link between them is either a fiction of the expatriate critic's imagination or merely fortuitous.'[1] He considers the crucial differences between the two literary modes to be in the relationships between the author and his audience, the place of literature in the total web of culture and the texture of the work itself. The traditional storyteller had a direct contact with his listeners while the writer is a lonely person who is only indirectly related to his audience. The various traditional forms of verbal art are an integral part of the cultural and social tribal structure, whereas modern literature is a particular sphere of rather specialized activity. Finally, traditional literary texts are recited to the accompaniment of musical instruments and attended by singing and dancing by the audience, while in the case of writing, the reader merely follows the verbal symbols on the page. All these factors, according to Crowder, have led to the disparity between oral and written literature. While all this is possibly true, the case of the vernacular authors requires a re-examination of Crowder's thesis. Technically speaking, they are in the same category of literary creativity as the Nigerian writers in English. They too have an immediate relationship with a typewriter rather than a live audience. Yet, if Osemwegie is a case in point, it is necessary to take into account the linguistic dimension in order to fully understand the current literary scene in Nigeria. The adoption of English as a literary language meant for the modern writers a rather sharp turn away from traditional themes and forms. For the most part, their writing is anchored where their language is, that is to say, in modern Nigerian life. In contrast, the vernacular authors establish a continuity in Nigerian literature. They incorporate traditional themes, beliefs and ideas in the new medium of writing. The changes which are involved in this transference from oral to written media are not to be underestimated, yet the employment of the same language ensures a continuity of tradition.

Ikponmwosa Osemwegie himself is traditional in more ways than one. In addition to subject matter, his actual learning of poetry follows the Bini traditional pattern. Although he attended school, he became acquainted with the world of literature in the family circle. His senior brother, an amateur poet himself, was the one who explained to him the methods of poetic composition, the principles of meter, and the structure of the stanza. In this sense, he follows the course other traditional artists in Benin take: learning their skill from their fathers or other senior members of the family.

Futhermore, aware of his lack of knowledge of traditional lore and archaic Bini, Osemwegie quit a secure position with the local government and started to do research on the Bini language. He continues to travel around the villages and record idioms and proverbs in *Edo n'Odinmwin*, deep Bini. He has learned to divine not for practical use, but in order to grasp all the facets of the diviners' language. Although he is a devout Christian, he participates actively in every possible traditional festivity so he can better comprehend the intricacies of the Bini idiom. As a result of this undertaking, he has become so knowledgeable that although he is not an enrolled student, professors in Ibadan University and the University of Nigeria, Nsukka, have hired him to assist them in their research on the Bini language. Thus, Osemwegie concentrates upon both philological research and poetic creativity, a combination that underlay the development of nationalistic literature in Europe in the nineteenth century and may provide a new direction to modern Nigerian literature.

[1] 'Tradition and Change in Nigerian Literature,' Tri-Quarterly, No. 5 (1966), 117.

NIGERIAN MUSIC AND MUSICIANS: THEN AND NOW

By

FELA SOWANDE

On 1st January, 1914, Lugard amalgamated Northern and Southern Nigeria, thus bringing the whole geographical area under a single administration based in Lagos. Approximately twenty-five years later, Southern Nigeria was divided into Western and Eastern Nigeria. Thus it was that when Nigeria became independent on 1st October, 1960, she had the three Regions: Northern, Eastern and Western, and her Federal Capital at Lagos. It is this division that we shall adopt in this inquiry, although a fourth Region, the Mid-West, came into existence recently.

January 1914 was a landmark in the history of Nigeria, for it was in the years immediately preceding that date that the Nigerian traditional way of life began to come under increasing pressures designed to uproot and destroy it. The ringleaders were the missionaries on the one hand, and on the other, a Colonial Government that had no patience with anything it did not approve, and had adopted Christianity as its official religion. January 1914 can, therefore, be regarded as separating the 'then' from the 'now' in Nigerian history.

But the centuries leading up to 1914 also fall into two main periods: the first period covering from around 600 to around 1800 A.D., for it was around 600 A.D. that, according to some historians, the Yorubas are believed to have left the Nile Valley, eventually to settle in Southern Nigeria; and it was not long after that (probably around 700 A.D.) that the Bornu Kingdom and the Seven Primary Hausa States began to take shape in Northern Nigeria. The second period will, therefore, cover from around 1800 to 1914, the year of amalgamation. The period following amalgamation can be taken as the third period, and will cover from 1914 up to date. We have, therefore, a broad division into three periods, namely: Period One, from around 600 to around 1800 A.D.; Period Two, from around 1800 to 1914, and Period Three, from 1914 up to date.

Fela Sowande recording a programme

Perhaps at this juncture we should remind ourselves of what Eliade said in *The Forge and the Crucible*: 'There is indeed, only one way of understanding a cultural phenomenon which is alien to one's own ideological pattern, and that is to place oneself at its very centre, and from there to track down all the values that radiate from it .... Before we proceed to judge it, we must fully understand it, and become imbued, as it were with its ideology, whatever form it may take—myth, symbol, rite, social attitude ....'

I think it would be to our advantage to take this as our point of departure, although, of course, one must realize that, in a brief survey such as this, gaps cannot be avoided, especially as we are dealing with a complex subject in a complex setting, and attempting to cover a wide interval of time.

Nigeria is shaped rather like a badly drawn square, 650 miles long by 700 miles wide, covering approximately 356,000 square miles, with a coastline of roughly

or eighteen playing strings made of grass-stalks and tuned in groups of three to a note . . . it is, even today, an inexhaustible list.

But what did music mean to traditional society in Nigeria? Some Western authorities subscribe to the idea that music is an aspect of human behaviour—physical, social, verbal or some other kind of behaviour; that music has many facets for its aspects include the historical, social-psychological, structural, functional, physical, psychological, cultural, aesthetic, symbolic, and others; and that therefore Music can and must be studied from many standpoints, for clearly no single kind of study can be successfully substituted for the whole. But were we to attempt to sell this idea to traditional man in Nigeria, he would either tell us to get lost, or his reply would be couched in such language that his vocabulary would be of considerable interest to dictionaries that have space for hitherto unprintable quadriliteral Anglo-Saxon words.

Our Nigerian traditional man would tell us that Sound was evocative; not that it 'could' be, but that by its very nature it was evocative; he would point to his 'words of power' or his 'mantrams', which he has used time and again to produce tangible results; if he happens to be a Yoruba, he would refer to those terrible vocal forms handed to him by his forefathers, such as the *Asan*, the *Ogede*, or the *Ofo*, patterns of Pure Sound, the like of which Elisha used in the Bible to call down fire on the soldiers sent to arrest him, or Jesus used to command the storm to be still. Nigerian traditional man knew—at least in Yorubaland—that through the medium of Sound, he could evoke and handle Psychic Forces of tremendous potencies, which his will could then direct as it suited his purpose. He knew this, not as theory, but as experienced fact.

Here, we have to recognize that the Nigerian traditional man's view of life did not rest on that foundation defined by Jung as 'a Scientific Causality . . . a merely statistical truth and not absolute, a sort of working hypothesis of how events evolve one out of the other'; his world was not one of dry sterile intellectuality; his species of knowledge was far removed from that which—in the words of D. H. Lawrence—has killed the Sun—making it a ball of gas; killed the Moon—turning it into a dead little earth fretted with extinct craters as with smallpox; and turned the Earth into a mere surface, more or less bumpy, over which you travel.

Our Nigerian traditional man might well remind us of what Professor Merriam said in his *Anthropology of Music*, which was, that despite the enormous literature devoted to aesthetics, it is extremely difficult to discover precisely what an aesthetic is; or he might draw our attention to Professor Bastide's article on 'The African Man by way of his religion,' where we find the following comment: 'In spite of an enormous literature, we have only a very poor knowledge of African religions. . . . Religion is seen from the outside as a thing and not from within as an experienced reality. . . . Books concerning the African Religion are basically no more than an immense gallery of mirrors which only reflect the image of ourselves, our desires, our dreams, or our passions. Will we ever be able to break these mirrors which deform? . . .'

Bastide's comments on books concerning African Religion are valid for books concerning African Music, which so far we tend to dissect as a thing, and not to approach as an experienced reality. In order to break the mirrors which deform in music as in other aspects of traditional life, we must initially recognize that the processes of thought of Nigerian traditional man had, for its foundation, what Jung defined as 'The Principle of Synchronicity' . . . 'which took full account of that peculiar inter-dependence of objective events among themselves as well as with the objective (psychic) states of the observer or observers.'

Dr Oruwariye of Ibadan supplies a good example of what one means: 'Think of a house falling on someone who is passing by,' he says. 'From the European point of view, the explanation is simple; the house is old; maybe there is an earthquake, or a breeze blows, and the house falls; the African does not leave it at that. He wants to know why that man, why that day, why that particular hour, and why that particular house out of so many houses, is involved. For practical purposes, for engineering, the European would reduce all the unknowns to a few, which would help him to make a prediction. All he has done is to simplify things. The African views the whole situation as a compact system; hence you will not be able to understand his activities, his cultural activities, unless you take his way of thinking into account'. The whole thing can be further simplified by saying that Scientific Causality seeks the answer to how a thing is done. While the answer to

the 'how' aspect seems to satisfy the European, it does not satisfy the African who is primarily interested in the 'why' aspect of everything, an answer that can only be found by the Principle of Synchronicity.

Thus it was that Nigerian traditional man saw himself dynamically related to a cosmos that was a living dynamic organism, and Sound—as Sound—became one of the most effective means of bringing that dynamic relationship into play, in practical terms. We shall never penetrate beneath the surface of Nigerian traditional music, until and unless we adopt this view of traditional man, who is likely to reject, out of hand, our present way of 'studying' traditional music through the measuring of intervals, analysis of rhythms, examining of song-texts, meticulous cataloguing of styles, et cetera, and is more likely than not to support Spengler's views that 'more would be revealed to us, if we were to write a history of musical instruments, not—as it always is—from the technical standpoint of tone-production, but as a study of the deep spiritual bases of the tone-colours and tone-effects aimed at.' So we come back to our question: What did music mean to traditional society in Nigeria?

I suggest here, as I have also done elsewhere, that in trying to find an answer to this question, we have to do three things; first, we regard Sound an evocative, or creative, in its own right, and as itself. Secondly, we regard music as 'the organization of the raw material of Sound into formal structural patterns that are meaningful and generally acceptable to that Society in which the organization has taken place, patterns that relate in a most intimate manner to the life-experiences of that Society, viewed as a homogeneous whole, and are accepted as such by that Society.' And thirdly, that we consider that traditional music is functional' at root, because it enabled its creators and practitioners to bridge the gulf between the visible and the invisible worlds, thus aligning Man with God and Nature, in one and the same hierarchy, in which Nature is part of Society, and Society itself consists of (1) the Ancestors and heroes, (2) the present generation, and (3) the next generation, all three regarded as forming one unit. The claims of the next generation and of the ancestors of the present generation explains in part why, in traditional society, property was defined in terms of family community or village, not in terms of individual ownership.

Traditional music had its light moments of course; but then—as Eliade puts it—for primitive man, the universe was steeped in sacredness; for him the world was not only 'alive' but 'open', for an object was never simply itself as is the case with us, it is also a sign of, or a repository for, something else; it is we who have lost the ability to experience the sacred in our dealing with matter. 'There is an immeasurable gulf,' he writes, in *The Forge and the Crucible*, 'between those who participate, in a religious spirit, in the sacred mystery of the liturgy, and those who derive a purely aesthetic pleasure from the beauty of its spectacle and the accompanying music.'

Even children's games' songs in traditional Nigerian Society partook of a liturgy, and helped to align the child with the thoughts of his ancestors, and the wisdom of his tribe: quietly and unobtrusively but thoroughly, the Nigerian child was trained and prepared for initiation, through his folk-songs and games' songs, into the ways of the group as a responsible member of a hierarchy. For traditional music communicated. It had to. It could not afford the doubtful luxury of thinking in terms of performers and audience, but in terms of performers and participants, even when 'participation' consisted of the total seclusion of women when such secret male cults like the Yoruba '*Oro*' came out. In this way, traditional music fused both performers and participants into one indivisible unit, thereby engendering a corporate feeling in the Society, which could be, and was, carried over into other spheres of activities.

But the idea of a hierarchy seems to run right through Nigerian traditional thought, for we find it expressed even in a hierarchy of drums and of drum-patterns, with the result that, at Ondo in Western Nigeria, I was able to record no less than twenty-four drum-patterns, each with its place in the Ondo scheme of things; one of these drum-patterns was the Ayogwa-Isi. Another example of this hierarchy in music is found among the Naragutas of Northern Nigeria, who have one Flute melody for the chief to dance to, and quite another for the common people.

Nigerian traditional music does not support the widespread idea that percussive rhythm is indispensable to African Music, for we find pure melody unsupported by drums all over Nigeria. One example is the traditional Youths' Song of the teenage girls of the tiny village of Zul near Bauchi in Northern Nigeria; another example

is the Oye Festival song by the wives of the chief at Ado-Ekiti in Western Nigeria; or we might cite that vocal form peculiar to the Egbas of Abeokuta (also in Western Nigeria) known as the *Ege*. We have pure recitative in such forms as the Ijala of the Yorubas, and a particularly beautiful example of recitative and aria in Wilberforce Echezona's recording of the '*Udu*' song in Eastern Nigeria; the rhythm here is far from noisy or boisterous, and the Apala drumming from Akure in Western Nigeria shows that drumming by itself can be as restrained as anyone could wish. But perhaps the important thing here is that we register the existence of pure melody in African music, as such, and in its own right. Thus, when Echezona sets the 150th Psalm to music in Ibo for unaccompanied choir, or Rev Olude writes Yoruba hymns for male voices only, or the Archdeacon Ashley-Dejo sets the Nicene Creed to Music in Yoruba for choir only without accompaniment, each of them is but utilizing that 'pure melody' form which already exists in Nigerian traditional music; it is not that they have dispensed with drums or other forms of rhythmic accompaniment.

But in the nineteenth century, Yorubaland plunged itself into fratricidal warfare that lasted for seventy years, and resulted in the decline of the Oyo kingdom, and the fragmentation of Yorubaland into rival states consumed by mutual hatred. What was the effect of this protracted warfare on the music of the period? One Yoruba war-camp of 1860 has been described by the historian Robert Smith, as being like a new town, several mud huts quickly thrown up with thatched roofs. Shaded trees were selected for look-outs, and hunter scouts were posted around. . . . 'As they dug themselves in, at the camp, a market developed nearby, and as much as possible the social life of a town was maintained. The main amusements were the war-drummers and the singers attached to the leading war lords, who constantly echoed familiar songs in praise of their lords, abused their opponents, praised valour and threatened their adversaries. The leading chiefs had wives to look after them, and the other soldiers received guests from the town.'

But traditional warfare must also have required rituals involving the use of serious forms of traditional music, for seeking the aid of the gods, or in other directions, as for example, in June 1860, when the Egbas were routed by the Ibadan soldiers, 'trumpets were wailing all night calling the name of the missing, in the hope that they might be hid in the bush and be directed by the sound to the camp.'

Furthermore we know that secret societies were entrusted with the job of keeping law and order in traditional societies; at times of general disturbance or unrest, these secret societies are likely to have been very active. Eastern Nigeria had its secret societies, and among those of Western Nigeria we have the dreaded '*Oro*' and '*Pakoko*'—Oro's father, secret male cults for the outings of which all women must retire behind closed doors, for no woman may see the Oro and live.

But while, in Southern Nigeria, the Yorubas were busy flying at each other's throats with incredible shortsightedness, Northern Nigeria was equally busy uniting itself. The Holy War of the Fulani reformer, Usman dan Fodio, which began in early 1804, had brought virtually all the North with the exception of Bornu under control by 1810, and by 1850, the Fulani Empire in Northern Nigeria covered well over three times the size of Western and Eastern Nigeria joined together. For practical purposes, the North had become one group under the Sultan of Sokoto, and was predominantly Moslem, Michael Crowder points out, however, in *The Story of Nigeria*, that this Holy War of dan Fodio was not a religious war between believer and infidel, but between radical reformer and a conservative willing to compromise in pursuit of stable government; it was more political than religious in character.

With its adoption of Islam, which had not much time for music as an integral part of religion, Hausa music proper—as distinct from the music of the pagan tribes indigenous to the North—began to be readily distinguished by such instruments as the *Goge*, or one-string fiddle, the Algaita with its double-reed, and of course the court bands of the North, known usually as the Personal Bands of the Emirs, among which that of the Emir of Kontagora was recorded some time ago; this group uses the long trumpet, known as the *Kakaki*, also characteristic of Northern Nigeria's Hausa Music.

Everyday that passed brought January 1914 nearer, however, and with it, the end of the comparative security that traditional music and musicians had till then enjoyed; the dice was heavily loaded against the traditionalists, and serious traditional music gradually withdrew behind an impenetrable cloak of anonymity, away from the reach of an increasingly sceptical new

generation of Nigerians, who despise their traditional patterns, and thought they were thereby emancipated. This was particularly true of Western Nigeria, which bore the brunt of the all-out attack on traditional patterns; the East was to some extent protected by its loosely organized society and by its difficult terrain; the North had wisely secured from Lugard prior to amalgamation, the promise that Missionaries would not be allowed in any Emirate in the North without the Emir's consent; this consent does not appear to have been readily forthcoming. Western Nigeria, on the other hand, was right on the doorstep of the colonial government in Lagos, its peoples were still organized under their chiefs, and it was in Abeokuta in Western Nigeria that the Missionaries first settled, the Anglicans in 1846, the Wesleyans in 1847, and the Baptists in 1850. Western Nigeria bore the full brunt of this attack, therefore, but this fact also supplies the main reason why, today, Western Nigeria has about a dozen musicians with academic training abroad, while Eastern Nigeria has but three, and Northern Nigeria has none. But in early twentieth century, the Yorubas of Western Nigeria were busy getting 'emancipated'.

One sign of this emancipation was to be seen coming from Church on Sundays, dressed in English suits which were often woollen and complete with waistcoats (or vests) wearing Saxone or Lennard shoes, perspiring profusely under the relentless tropical sun that seemed totally unwilling or incapable of 'emancipating' itself, and against which the only protection was a felt hat, or a bowler hat and walking stick. The emancipated Nigerian of this period seems to have come from the same stock as Noel Coward's 'mad dogs and Englishmen' who go out in the noonday sun!

Another sign of emancipation was a supposed fluency in the English language, which had then become the official language of government; the acquisition of this supposed fluency was an almost morbid obsession, but unfortunately it meant no more than finding and using the longest and most high-sounding words in the English language, with or without appropriateness mattered very little, for it was the 'sound' of the words that mattered. One did not say 'I disagree with you'; one said instead, something like: 'my decision that I cannot accord you my acceptability is stamped with irrevocability'; then one has proved his mastery of the English language, and was greeted with clapping of hands and shouts of '*igi iwe*', as assertion that one had become a veritable 'tree of books'.

Apparently history still repeats itself; for the London Week-end *Sunday Telegraph* of May 28, 1965, reproduced a letter written by a young Nigerian to a young English girl now serving with the Voluntary Service Organization in Nigeria. What the young Nigerian wanted to say was, simply, 'I like you, can we be friends?' but according to the *Telegraph*, this was what he wrote: 'I am seizing this chance to signify my willingness to be on cordial terms with you. I admire your cheerful appearance. This bold attempt perhaps will be the beginning of a friendly and symbiotic association between us. Kindly elicit a reply so I know what your opinion is.'... But let us go back to the emancipated Nigerian of early twentieth century Nigeria.

Through this preoccupation with English, we lost command of our own language, became strangers to our proverbs and wise sayings, our effective vocabulary dwindled, and we became utterly insensitive to the musical requirements of our tone-languages. The Mission schools conferred great benefits on the young Nigerian, but at the price of further weaning him away from his traditional background and music; while these Mission schools paid great attention to Music Education it was to European Music, and with the purpose of enabling their schoolmasters, catechists and priests to play simple Anglican chants and hymns from staff notation on the harmonium, which replaced Nigerian traditional musical instruments. Nigerian drums were totally tabooed—they were 'pagan instruments', and in the front line of those things destined to be consigned to hell—and thus the square, unprepossessing and unimaginative 'comp-cha comp-cha' rhythm usurped the place of the much more plastic and romantic basic Nigerian rhythm, the *Konkolo*.

So we find that in Christian Churches in Southern Nigeria, Yoruba and Ibo hymns were for the most part nothing more than translation of English verses into Yoruba or Ibo, with the English tunes retained over the translations. The result was a shambles, for these Nigerian languages were tonally-inflected, and the meaning of a word was determined by the inflection imposed on that word. Echezona confirmed this fact for his Ibo language in one of his Radio talks, and cites the example of the European Missionary who intended to say 'God has Great Powers,' but ended up by saying

'God has large buttocks.' Likewise, in Yoruba, the words 'O come all ye faithful' translates as '*Wa, enyin oloto*'; but when those same Yoruba words are sung to the Christmas tune '*Adeste Fidelis*', they become '*Wa enyin, oloto*,' or in English: 'Go out and dig for palm-kernels, ye who are fond of passing water'!

But it was the same Mission School that produced Echezona and Harcourt White in Eastern Nigeria, Rev J. J. Ransome-Kuti, Rev A. T. Olude, Archdeacon Ashley-Dejo, and others like them in Western Nigeria, people who have set about writing music for the Christian Church in Nigeria, in which the natural inflection of Ibo or Yoruba words are fully respected by the music.

It was the same Mission School that produced Mr (now Dr) T. K. E. Phillips of Western Nigeria, whose contribution to music in Nigeria cannot be over-estimated. Phillips was the second Nigerian to study music abroad, and the first to study in England. He had been preceded forty years earlier by Mr (later Rev) R. A. Coker, who had studied in Germany in 1871, but had taken Holy Orders on return to Nigeria. Phillips came to the Trinity College of Music in 1911, and returned to Nigeria in 1914. It was he who pin-pointed the fact that training in Western Music can be—and should be—used to the benefit of Nigerian music. His setting of the Magnificat in Yoruba is typically Phillips, and is a fine example.

The access by some of us in Nigeria to privately-owned radio sets in the 1930's in Lagos, led to the formation of the Triumph Club Dance Orchestra. The subsequent arrival of commercial gramophone records, and the establishment of radio stations in Nigeria led to a rash of popular bands using Western European dance-band instruments. Some of these Nigerian popular bands were good, some were bad, others were indifferent. Sometimes one comes across an imaginative bandleader like Chris Ajilo, who arranged a Dahomean War Song for his Dance Band with excellent results. Time has weeded out most of the bad and indifferent bands, and the rest are beginning to learn that the Nigerian public to which they seek to cater is no less fickle than its counterpart in other countries. Today, the spotlight seems to be on I. K. Dairo, M.B.E., and his Blue Spots, a unit that specializes in what we call 'Juju Music'.

The two World Wars pitchforked Nigeria into the mainstream of world events. More and more Nigerians—mostly from Western Nigeria until quite recently—studied music abroad, and experimentation with European musical forms became considerably intensified. The seeds sown by Phillips over a life-span had taken root, and were sprouting. The result has been, so far, two types of original composition—and here we are dealing with the Nigerian musician with academic training. In the first type of composition, European forms are used without any reference to Nigerian elements in the music. Mr Akin Euba's String Quartet is one example; Mr Ayo Bankole's Piano Suite—which includes his 'Meditation'—is another example; so are my Art Songs for Tenor and String Orchestra.

But in the second type of composition, the aim is to fuse European Forms with one aspect or another of Nigerian, African or Afro-American music. Thus Mr Bankole uses Nigerian melodies in his Art Songs for Baritone; Mr Lazarus Ekweme, of Eastern Nigeria, bases his Nigerian Rhapsody for Strings on Eastern Nigerian melodies, and incorporates Nigerian rhythms into his Mass. I have used Negro Spirituals, melodies and rhythms from Ghana, and of course from Nigeria, in my contributions.

We regard these two main types of compositions as valid, for we are not prepared to submit to the doctrine of 'apartheid' in art, by which a Nigerian musician is expected to work only within the limits of his traditional forms of music.

Radio Stations in Nigeria had the initial and unfortunate effect of causing a serious decline in spontaneous music-making in the villages. But the approach of Nigerian Independence, which encouraged a return to national dress in place of the tweed suits, and a return to our Nigerian languages, has also revived considerable interest in Nigerian traditional music. Nigerian staff of the Nigerian Broadcasting Corporation have been instrumental in collecting material on aspects of Nigerian folklore and traditional music in the field, in all the Regions in the country; this material is then broadcast to the general public by the Broadcasting Corporation. Typical of these taped programmes is the interesting material prepared by Mr Uzo Okosieme, of Eastern Nigeria, on the '*Uboh*' or 'hand-piano' of that Region. Television, a much more recent arrival, now features Nigerian plays by Nigerian playwrights, in which

Nigerian music—traditional and otherwise—features regularly.

But it is time to bring this brief survey to an end. What does the future look like for Nigerian music and musicians?

Many are the problems that face us today, and many more will yet raise their ugly heads. But I think that any one of these problems can be tracked down, ultimately, to one or a combination of two or more of six basic problems, which I shall now enumerate, but will not develop for lack of time. These six basic problems are:

1. The undue emphasis placed on science and technology by independent African states to the detriment of art, whereby man attempts to 'live by bread alone.'

2. The attempt by the great majority of so-called 'educated Africans'—whose sole claim to being educated seems to be that they are literate—to draw the line at a 'limited identification' with their traditional past, so that, in music, to dance to highlife bands in night clubs is synonymous with love for African music.

3. The acquisition of Western technique as an end in itself, and not as a means to an end, which should be the natural development of traditional music.

4. The dangers inherent in an uncontrolled nationalism whereby the nationals of any one country forget that, in the final analysis, they are members of one human family.

5. The danger of breeding a race of artistic eunuchs, through submitting to planning from the outside on African music as a thing and not as an experienced reality; the planning is usually done by people with hardly any real links with the basics of the way of life for which they try to plan, even though their sincerity is beyond question. The missionaries are a case in point, but we are far from being safe from our friends even today. One is reminded of the old American Negro who, when he heard the phrase 'The Negro Problem,' retorted 'I'se not a problem, I'se a person.'

6. The age-old suspicion and antagonism between the responsible custodians of traditional lore, and the non-traditionalists of the same nationality.

As I see it, these six categories can be amplified to show how such problems as communication across geographical boundaries in art, or education, or what you will, are but offshoots of one or more of these six. They are real problems but I am sure that, one way or another, we in Nigeria will either solve them, or short-circuit them so effectively that they lose their power to hold us back. We have cause to be of good cheer, for I think that the President of the Society of African Culture in Paris, Dr Jean Price-Mars, was merely stating a fact when he said: 'Even when mixed with other human varieties—a very ordinary phenomenon since the beginning of the world—the Negro is always ready to break the borrowed mould to mark his general humanity with that certain quality that distinguishes him wherever he is to be found.' Likewise Dr George Carter, Director of Information Programme of the American Society of African Culture, when he said: '...If the past is any indication, the inherent flexibility and genius for accommodation of the African peoples argue well for the possibility that traditional African forms will not only survive but, wedded to the new, will issue in concepts, institutions and values that the rest of the world might do well to regard.'

I have no doubt, therefore, that in a future that may yet prove much nearer than we dare to imagine at this point in time, Nigeria's contributions to the world of music at large will be among the most valuable that have ever been made. And that, at home and abroad, wherever music is made or enjoyed, we—the children of Nigeria—will enjoy pride of place among

> The black races of Africa
> Children of the Sun
> Hardy and superb
> Givers of gifts to the common stock
> Without which all other gifts were bare

and so shall it be.

MUSIC EDUCATION IN NIGERIAN SCHOOLS

The Programme

Music education on a bi-cultural basis, designed to embrace traditional Nigerian (and by extension, African) art-patterns on the one hand, and on the other —European forms and techniques. The subsequent fusion of the two is the end sought.

Field research in depth into Nigerian (and African) folklore, traditional music, poetry and the dance. The history of Nigerian music and musicians of traditional times, and the uncovering of traditional ideas on traditional music complete with the relevant myths and legends involved, will form an important part of the research programme.

Preparation of text-books from research material for educational use, and the distribution of the research material to educational institutions on an international level.

The need for the programme

Among many important reasons may be mentioned, briefly, the need to ensure cultural integration in the individual Nigerian, especially now that he is increasingly exposed to other cultures; . . . the tendency on the part of Nigerians to down-grade their own traditional background; . . . the great emphasis now laid on science and technology by independent African States to the almost total neglect of art; . . . the increasingly rapid submersion of the more serious forms of traditional art by the less serious forms of Western art (*i.e.*, 'bop' and 'twist' instead of Haydn and Mozart); . . . the invaluable contribution that can be made by Nigeria to music in general, given the right conditions; . . . the value of making music serve the cause of international peace and goodwill, through 'education' defined as 'learning to build a secure foundation under the ideals of the race'; and as 'the release of ideals, and the determination of spiritual values,' and not as the acquisition of college degrees—a misdefinition to which too many Africans are prone.

The broad aims of the programme in outline

(*a*) To inculcate a genuine love for—and a conscious pride in—one's cultural heritage.

(*b*) To develop:

- (*i*) musical literacy;
- (*ii*) standards of musical criticism based on the content and form to be found in Nigerian traditional music;
- (*iii*) the capacity for intelligent critical appreciation of music in general;
- (*iv*) a consciousness of the similarities and differences between African and European musical and poetic structures (*i.e.*, scale, rhythm, poetic form), and to examine how far European structures can be used with advantage for African music;
- (*v*) a genuine love for good art, regardless of its origin.

(*c*) To explore music as an art, with the specific aim of satisfying the spiritual, emotional and aesthetic needs of the individual, primarily as a Nigerian.

(*d*) To encourage human relationships, through corporate activities, such as drumming, dancing or singing groups, or through friendly competitive events.

The research aspect of the programme

An understanding has already been reached in principle with the Director-General and the Controller Staff Training Officer of the Nigerian Broadcasting Corporation (NBC), by which the NBC's Research Assistants will be deployed jointly with the NBC by this programme. Equipment currently in use will, however, need to be examined with a view to securing good quality recorded tapes, and full documentation—including visuals—of field material. The wiring-up and publication of material already in hand will also require attention.

The music-education aspect of the programme

(*a*) *Traditional patterns.*—Nigerian Instructors, very likely semi-literate or non-literate but experienced artists in their respective fields, will give practical instruction in traditional drumming, singing and dancing; these instructors will be drawn from Nigeria's four Regions, so as to cover the entire country. The construction, care and maintenance of traditional instruments will form part of the course.

(*b*) *Western European patterns.*—Academically qualified instructors, Nigerian and non-Nigerian, will teach theory and practice of music, and give practical courses in Western musical instruments.

(*c*) *Compositional techniques.*—Is regarded as of considerable importance (*see* 3 (*b*) (*iv*) above). The attempt to build a tradition of fine art in music in Nigeria has already begun; but it needs to be encouraged and properly directed. The present situation in which, in a country unbelievably rich in raw music-material, less than twenty-four persons have any real musical training in a population of approximately fifty million is far from ideal.

Levels of instruction

(*a*) It is thought that, in order to reach Primary and Secondary Schools more rapidly, this programme should be aimed, initially, at Teacher-Training Colleges as a controlled experiment in its first phase. For perhaps a three-year course, students will be hand-picked according to their aptitude for music, and will not be allowed to opt out of the course once admitted.

(*b*) Granted sufficient backing, however, this programme could be offered at the following levels:

(*i*) as a subsidiary course at one of Nigeria's universities, as a controlled experiment;

(*ii*) as an extramural subject at the same university for members of the general public;

(*iii*) at selected Teacher-Training Colleges as a controlled experiment;

(*iv*) at selected Primary and Secondary Schools, as extra-curricular activities, within the range and the scope of these schools; in Primary Schools, for example, the programme will hardly cover more than Nigerian folksongs and rhythmic games in the traditional pattern.

In this latter case—where the programme can be offered more widely—the aim would be to select Nigerian and non-Nigerian instructors in Western music in such a way that the group forms, on its own, a complete music unit—perhaps a small chamber ensemble—which, in addition to tutorials, can give live concerts of serious (but not heavy) Western music, as often and in as many places as possible. A group of this type would also offer tremendous stimulus to Nigerian composers-in-training in their search for effective ways of fusing Nigerian patterns with European forms and techniques.

Personal Note.—The Peace Corps in Washington, whom I approached a few years back on this matter, was very keen on fully co-operating; had it been possible to get a formal request made by an established educational body in Nigeria, a special Peace Corps contingent would have been organized, most willingly, for us.

Implementation of the programme

My experience of the last five years, in the attempt to get some programme such as has been outlined started in Nigeria, leaves me no alternative but to conclude that the first step must be the setting up of a Board of Control in Nigeria, consisting of Nigerians in the main, who are free of political and religious biases and are active in the educational field. This Board of Control will be responsible to the Commonwealth Cultural Organization.

It will be necessary, further, to ensure that the Board of Control clearly understands whatever programme is ultimately adopted by the Commonwealth Cultural Organization, and is willingly committed to its detailed implementation. Then one can reasonably hope that, with sufficient financial safeguards, funds earmarked for the programme will in fact be so used, that this programme will educate and not mis-educate, and that if there should be pressures calculated to sabotage the programme, it will be possible to deal with them effectively by the Board of Control and the Commonwealth Cultural Organization acting in concert.

Books

Black Eros by Henry Goverts, Stuttgart 1965, Boris de Rachewiltz £3–4s

(Negro-women kiss very seldom, and when they kiss, their kisses are humid and noisy).

IF there exists a book useful to give a better insight into the nervousness which befalls modern Africans in view of the descriptions of their traditional customs and culture by Europeans, it is this one. It is written in the somewhat naive and one-sided way as it has been done since the periods of colonialism and mission and it ignores the complexity of problems which are the order of the day for the developing African continent. After having read the book, one gets the impression that the title is not adequately chosen. If the book had been called: 'Black Sex and Fertility,' it would have been in accord with its contents.

The author promises—and this promise in most of the books about Africa is the only thing that has changed since the time of colonialism—to demonstrate the role which eros, 'this powerful force acting from the very origin' has played in the customs of the different people having lived in Africa. Under the title, 'The Archaic Cycle,' different rock-paintings and paintings of prehistoric times are shown with scenes of sexual contents, 'of such a crude realism that the modern individual with his sensitivity would not hesitate to call obscene.' Far from this, the author tells us, these hyper-naturalistic representations of what in Europe is called primary genital marks, above all the phallus, were connected with fertility rites which, in the beginning of creation, were of first importance in the lives of the so-called primitives. These representations of sexuality and its power served 'to show the cosmic relations, to realize individual desires and to stimulate the vital flame of procreation.' Furthermore, there was sexual hunting-magic by which continuance of food was influenced by magic, as for example, the customs of the South African hunters of hippopotamus who start their sexual hunting magic by ritual intercourse.

In spite of what is called in our days sexual hygiene, the Africans of traditional society have cultivated and taken care of their sexual organs in a very conscious way and in watching their function with regard to procreation and continuance of the community. This care and the rituals connected with it determined their whole sexual life. These rituals have related the African individual with nature and the dynamic forces of his subconscious which he was able to dominate and influence in this way. In this sense of a sacred eros, the cosmological myths of the Egyptians are interpreted by de Rachewiltz as follows: the self-creation of the Sun-god RA through unification with himself, by masturbation or self-mutilation of the sexual organs, a mutilation which is interpreted by the author as a mythological form of the circumcision. Still, before the circumcision of the boy and the clitoridectomy of the girl, African children deal very intensively with their genitals. This does not happen as the European sexual codex prescribes, far from their parents watching eyes, but in full agreement with the sexual customs prescribed by the community and at the same time emerging from a positive and admiring attitude towards sexuality, although every tribe has different degrees of sexual freedom. In some of them, every sexual activity from the part of the children is strictly suppressed, in others masturbation or the very intensive occupation with their sexual organs, sometimes in company with their comrades of the same age, is desired or even asked. The girls are instructed with regard to their genitals by their mothers or elder women, and these instructions are

far from being restricted to procreation or sexual hygiene in the form of a glandular mythology which promises the modern individual the biological paradise, but also out of joy and lust of sensual life which is apt even to please the gods. So there are tribes where children have sexual intercourse before sexual maturity; only puberty brings this freedom to a temporary end. The girls are isolated from community life with the beginning of menstruation and have to undergo very severe and sometimes cruel purifying rituals.

Circumcision and clitoridectomy are crucial points in the lives of girls and boys. De Rachewiltz distinguishes four reasons for circumcision: (1) hygiene or ritual cleanliness, (2) circumcision very short after birth, as Hebrews do, (3) circumcision, respecting clitoridectomy as 'rite de passage' from childhood to man- or womanhood. The fourth category is an exclusively African one: a sacred act to fix the masculine or feminine characteristics in the initiated person. The following explanations remind us of C. G. JUNG's passages considering 'animus' and 'anima', the psychic characteristics of the other sex in each individual's soul: 'Africans believe that each individual possesses the characteristics of both sexes equally at birth. At its origin, the individual was supposed to be bi-sexual, only the rites of puberty were powerful enough to remove the foreign sexual element and to fix the definite element.' The prepuce of the boy and the clitoris of the girl are considered as marks of the other sex which have to be removed in order to obtain the actual sexual character. A transformation of such importance, naturally, could not happen without the corresponding rituals and ceremonies. The initiation rites are practised among children of the same age; the common event unites the participants in mutual help and friendship through their whole lives, also in modern times where the participants of the same age absolved military service together.

After initiation something happens by which a European would become pale with envy when he thinks back to his anxieties of sexual life under the dictatorship of pre-freudian parents. The boys do not only start a full sexual life, but the community expects them to yield to every sexual desire, if only they avoid to break the commands of their group. Many tribes are very accurate about the quality of sexual activity. If, for example, the Dchisu-woman is not satisfied by her husband, she starts crying so loudly that all the neighbours run out of their houses: 'The penis of my husband is dead!' She must be envied terribly by many European women who have to compensate the surplus of their sexual desires in beating their carpets on the balcony with temperament or in overacting their scrubber on an innocent floor.

In every community there are taboos and restrictions with regard to the pre-matrimonial intercourse, but even in this phase, sexuality as such is restricted to any taboo and is done without shame or complexes. With the same freedom, sexuality is discussed or even sung. So the young boys in Uganda are said to hum when they see a pretty girl: 'I have lust for your vagina! A shilling for your vagina!'

As de Rachewiltz tells us, polygamy which is criticized by the Christians even now, is not only a demographic 'sex ratio' as a consequence of a surplus of woman, but the protection of the women for two or three years after childbirth. During this time—and this also is one of these examples of sympathetic African realism—her husband cannot be condemned to sexual abstinence, so that he takes a second woman or, according to his economic capacity, more women with whom he sticks to this cycle.

If we compare these refined customs with the sexual-erotic barbarism which in the Europe of today still exists in spite of the famous sex-wave and the hysteria of sexual enlightenment, Europeans certainly cannot be proud. They can be relieved only in front of certain African practices. The prepuce is cut without narcotization with an annealed instrument, so is the clitoris with a knife—very generous—by pressing a burning log on it, after having swollen it by a compress of nettles. Other sexual rites are not less cruel, as, for example, an initiation ceremony of the Kikuyu during which the initiated person has to eat a little piece of meat of a ram's penis, after having put it in the menstruating vagina of a girl. With such practices and more cruel ones, Christians are inclined to hold their lesser cannibal initiations more agreeably and even the price that Europeans pay for their age-long domestication appears not too high to them.

It is here, that the reader of African literature who likes to penetrate the surface, would expect some conclusions in the sense of a confrontation of old Africa with the new African continent on the one hand, and

of Africa with Europe and its background on the other. This differentiation is justified, as the author has promised in his introduction: 'to penetrate the African soul by the door of Eros.' But after a rather careless description of prostitution, sexual perversions and venereal diseases, the book ends abruptly. De Rachewiltz did not promise us an African Kinsey Report, this was—fortunately—not his intention. We also wait—let's hope in vain—for an African sex-wave, the scientific orgasm, the measurement of the blood-pressure during the coitus. But a book entitled *Black Eros* should have given us, one may think, at least a slight indication about one thing: whether there is in Africa some kind of love feeling beyond naked sex. Or are Africans—as de Rachewiltz's book seems to tell us—only capable of procreating and not of love?

The excellent pictures of the book show very clearly that there are girls and women in Africa who recall the first day of creation: graceful, pure, beautiful in a way European feminine refinement never could obtain, not even in a thousand years of cosmetic efforts. When we see these girls and women, we guess that they are as susceptible to respect, love, tenderness and that their reactions against unkindness, recklessness, brutality from the part of men, must be the same as European women: frigidity, neurosis, hysteria, etc. And there is the young African with a sensible intelligence and a differentiated human consciousness who, as we may suppose, does not try to satisfy his wife with books of modern sexologists in his hand or give her his last masculine efforts towards perfect orgasm, and also simply loves. It seems that these questions for the author no longer belong to the black Eros, but to the white or the spotted one; for him, black Eros seems to be connected in the first rank with the association of smacking kisses of negro-women or pictures of over-dimensioned genitals.

The precise answer to the questions: What is Eros? What is meant by sexuality? What about fertility? Does it belong to Eros or to sexuality? are important and of highest actuality not only with regard to Africa but also with regard to Europe and to U.S.A. in their actual state of sex-exitation and sex-mania and from there back to Africa which is fascinated not only by the advantages and merits of civilized life but also by everything that is put into it by the devil. In pre-historic times with its cosmical religions and sexuality, Eros and fertility were undivided. Neither has sexuality been put to the yoke of procreation, as it was commanded by an anti-erotic and wrongly interpreted by Christianity, nor has erotic life—as a reaction of a hundred years old inhibition of sexual instincts—been replaced by an unchained sexuality. We poor Europeans seem to be condemned to the extremes on every sector; not so long ago we were, as a writer of sex-articles puts it, forbidden to do it, and today—and this concerns above all the U.S.A.—we are obliged to do it if we want to keep our masculine or feminine prestige. But under this appearance of sex hysteria we all await for the moment when sexuality and Eros become one anew and fertility is understood at the same time in a higher sense, as a psycho-spiritual creative force beyond the fabrication of new life in the same line with the production of material products. Africans, I think, will be grateful when we conjure up the world of their Eros in its entirety and when we avoid to open the same gap which made us sick in a way from which we have not yet recovered.

A similar impression is created in the book *The Face of the African Women* of Peter Fuchs DeutscheVerlagsanstalt Stuttgart, 1966, price £4–8*s*.

It shows the African woman in the world of the bush, the savanna in front of straw and loam huts, with her simple duties as stamping *fufu*, carrying water, doing pottery, weaving, bustling around the market, and ever again together with children, in the most diverse make-up of clothes, finery, hairdress, tattooing or with typically African delicacies such as lengthened ear-lobes, plate-lips, lip-plugs, etc. These pictures certainly do not fail to work on Europeans, mostly because of their costly set-up on glazed paper, but they only show one single aspect of what the author promises us as the 'true nature of the African woman.' By pointing out these facts, the author wants to correct the picture of the 'savage,' the 'hot-blooded, sentimental black woman' which was ingrained in the European mind with the African woman for generation; or as tourists in a brief visit may see it. As opposed to *Black Eros*, this rectification is more differentiated; at least Peter Fuchs concedes that Africans are able to love. By this, he corrects at the same time the picture which many Europeans have of African love: as a sultry, lascivious sensuality which is mostly nothing else than the projection of European soiled fantasy and sultriness. Peter Fuchs points out correctly that the African woman, above

all the nomad, is nothing more than a working animal, a procreating-machine, an object of lust, delivered without mercy to the humours and cruelties of her master; that under such conditions it is impossible to think of any physical or psychical satisfaction on her part. This very precious information is illustrated in a very impressive way by stories and tales strewed into the text which tell about certain customs and facts sometimes of a cruel kind. For example, the destiny of a young woman who cannot give birth to her child, and trails after a whole night of vain efforts to the village of her mother, who traverses a wild river and dies, is illustrated.

Some descriptions of customs which for the European are difficult to understand are rather brief. In connection with polygamy, Fuchs writes: 'Most Africans are afraid of a polygamous marriage. When they are not particularly obliged, they prefer to live monogamous.' To prove this, Fuchs mentions that the polygamous husband has to make continuous efforts to keep his wives in check. In view of the efforts which are made by modern African states—not at last under the pressure of the Churches—to introduce monogamy and fix it by law, one would expect African husbands to feel released. The contrary applies. The modern African does not only stick to polygamy because it corresponds to tradition, but because he is accustomed to replacing a wife who has lost her attraction by a younger one. The young African woman prefers monogamy, and her sorrow must be that the average African man—other than the European?—is said not to be very faithful. When a young African woman is cultivated, it is, as Fuchs tells us, very difficult for her to find a husband. Is this different in Europe?—Let us ask the European woman!

One of the passages which demonstrates best a very great carelessness of judgement and at the same time the well-known naivety of the European approach to certain African matters is about African religion, although the author confirms that without any understanding of African religion, the African individual cannot be understood properly. Like in an enumeration of export-articles he writes: 'There is also God in Africa. He has got human characteristics, lives in the sky and his skin is black. How could it be otherwise, because God seems to be similar to himself for everybody, there is no other measure. For the African, God is black, is a Negro as he is. The African fears God, but he does not love him.' This passage shows very clearly that the author never heard of Yoruba religion. If he did, he never would have said so of the African.

God is black, a Negro as He himself. God certainly for him is not white nor yellow nor brown, but an invisible being, so great and inaccessible that He cannot be imagined or worshipped directly. Adoration and worship by the Yoruba is shown towards the *orishas*, a sort of ministers of the Highest God. To connect this God with the word Negro would mean for every Yoruba a sacrilege, because of a different reason as Europeans would deduce. Songs and a very rich poetry show clearly that the African does not only fear God, but praises Him, this certainly can be considered as a form of love. And finally: who in our days can assert with good conscience that he loves God?

In the same tribe of the Yorubas, women—with regard to their social rank—are not placed in the rank of cattle or—if we take for example the importance of cattle for the Fulani—even much below, but she takes, also economically, her completely independent position beside her husband. And in the religion of the Ashanti, the famous queenmother is not the mother of the king, but an equal sovereign over women's affairs. Examples like these, are not mentioned. One may think this is because they are not effectful enough for the reader of books about Africa whose tongue has been spoiled by the pepper of sensationalism which has been mixed with the text in order to give the book a better chance of being sold.

A similar diffusion is found in the chapter entitled 'The Medium' in which magic is dealt with. Magic is explained in our days by modern depth psychology as follows: in the souls of modern individuals, in their dreams and designs, very similar images, symbols and patterns have been discovered as they exist in the tales, myths and symbols of the so-called primitives C. G. JUNG, the famous Swiss psychologist, discovere similar elements at the same time in the dreams c patients and in the religious world of the Elgonyis (Mt. Elgon in Kenya. Rituals and ceremonies ha protected the African individual from all the conflic and psychic disturbances which in the civilized countr caused psychiatry to become a substitute for religi Fuchs writes that the statement of a medium in tranc

a woman—comes out of the unconscious, 'where all what she has heard and seen, together with the very feminine desire to preserve everything that tradition has established as sure and true exists,' that a medium, therefore, will never predict revolutionary ideas and that its oracle will condemn in any case everything definitely new or what may turn away from the old traditions. In writing this, Fuchs misunderstands completely the function of the unconscious as well as the function of the medium which is not to predict his own wishes, but, truth out of the cosmic sphere which is able to correct—against the private wishes, or even the wishes of the community—selfish or wrong actions or to give directions in situations of insecurity or danger. As far as revolutionary concepts are concerned, they are not part of the character of the magical—and this is one of the reasons the broad masses of the not yet civilized countries have some difficulty in getting out of their inertness—but out of the magical sphere, prophecy concerning the destiny of the community is possible.

In the chapter 'The Feast', Fuchs mentions one talent for which Africans are praised in the same proportion as the rest of the world is ignorant about: dance. 'Concerning dance and music, Africans are the most gifted part of mankind,' he writes, and he ends the chapter with a phrase which, in my view, is not only his greatest merit, but which one would wish that well-informed Africans would write into their diary: 'In this artistic field, the great spiritual reserves of Africa are hidden—unlifted treasures of mankind.' But what a shame that Fuchs takes over without any criticism the fundamental principles of dance which CURT SACHS points out in his *World History of Dance*, namely the division of dances into dances against the body, which Sachs names cramp-dances, and dances with the body, this means dances with body-consciousness. The fact that African dance is body-conscious is new to the European, because to him, African dance seems to be nothing more than a wild, uncontrolled throwing around, shaking, dwindling, twisting and twitching of the body. That in African dance, on the contrary, every movement is precise and follows certain laws, is to most Europeans as new as what HELMUT GUNTHER and HELMUT SCHAFER write in their book, *From the Shamans to the Rumba:* that African dance means absolute control over muscle and body. This makes clear that with regard to African dance we can speak about everything else but not of cramp, which will not even be found in the most convulsive and ecstatic movements. It is primarily we Europeans who introduced cramp-dances into world-history, and cramps not only in the field of dancing.

In the same chapter, Fuchs mentions that Africans dance mostly in groups, both sexes separately; that they never dance in couples as the Europeans. As an explanation, he points out, that Africans do not feel comfortable in dancing close together, that they do not like intimate body contact. During my stay in Africa, I got many impressions about Africans, good and bad, but certainly not—when one remembers for example their way of greeting—that they are hostile towards body contact. In traditional society this contact mostly symbolizes sexual union and, therefore, as JANHEINZ JAHN writes in *Muntu*, it can only be regarded as a culmination point of the dance. Dances which Europeans consider as decent would therefore mean for the Africans a continuous copulation and would be for them—and in Europe mostly are—insupportably obscene.

If de Rachewiltz misses his subject in some way by restricting himself exclusively to manners and customs connected with sexuality and fertility, and if one gets the impression that he had copied his text light-handed from a pile of ethnological volumes, we find in the book of Fuchs, in spite of the critical remarks which are not meant in a deprecating sense, but as serviceable to the subject, a most sensible and loving manner to deal with certain appearances. For this, he gives a better understanding for African traditions than a compilation of thousands of details. Both books are recommendable, because both of them show in their way that beside Africa as a reception-pot of exceeding finances and exceeding charity on the one hand, and Africa as a stumbling-block on the other, there exists an Africa worthy of a thorough research.

Such a research into the actual situation of sexual traditions in and outside Africa is necessary not only in the interest of ethnology, anthropology and sociology but, above all, in the interest of the practical questions and problems which can only be solved in the context of African spiritual and psychic background.

Where the smacking kisses of Negro-women, mentioned at the beginning, are concerned, there is one remark to be made: among all sort of research projects

there is one missed until now, and I would like to apply for it: a research-project about the nature of kisses which certainly would teach us more about African matters as all research-projects together. May be there is a big arch starting from the level of these smacking kisses and leading to softer ones, from humid ones to dryer ones, which are not necessarily less intense and ardent. And may be that in the intensity of one single conscious kiss, the kissing subject may find—like in a spectrum—the whole story of tales, myths, rituals, gods, magical forces and energies which once upon a time had their right to exist in a closed and well-structured society. They have been banished in our days, so they call loudly for their revival in a new setting of post-enlightened oneness.

RENATO BERGER

YORUBA RELIGIOUS CARVING

By

KEVIN CARROLL

Pagan and Christian Sculpture in Nigeria and Dahomey. 172 *pp. Geoffrey Chapman* 90*s.*

FATHER Carroll has been associated with, and has taken a predominant part in an experiment in the adaptation of traditional Nigerian crafts to Christian use. In 1947 he helped to start at Oye Ekiti in Ondo Province a centre for the production of craftwork for the use of Roman Catholic Churches, and after 1953 when the centre was closed he carried on the work elsewhere together with his normal mission duties. This book is about the experiment and its results but it also includes an important and very valuable study of traditional Yoruba carving in its religious setting.

It seems that the church was as cautious as a government department in pursuing to finality a project for the encouragement of art, but Father Carroll makes no comment on the decision to end the centre at Oye. Nor does he have anything to say about how, if at all, his initial ideas were altered by experience but he gives full justice to criticism of the attempt, and his conclusion in this book is that the hope for a vital and deep Christian art lies not so much with traditional artists as with sophisticated and Christian artists trained in modern art schools. That such a hope should lie in art schools seems rather baseless and is not much encouraged by the examples of the work of modern Nigerian artists which are given in the latter chapters of this book: the modern malaise is unlikely to be cured so easily.

The first step in the experiment was to find good traditional carvers; this was achieved when Bandele, the son of Areogun, one of the most brilliant of Yoruba carvers, came forward. Other traditional carvers who also came to be associated with the work were Lamidi, son of a traditional carver of Illa, and Otooro of Ketu in Dahomey. They carved Madonnas, crucifixes, Christmas cribs, figures of saints, stations of the cross and church doors, each work having been fully discussed with them before they started. They soon all reached an extremely high standard of craftmanship as is shown by the photographs in this book, but it is one of the qualities of Father Carroll's writing that he makes no extravagant claims for them.

If the experiment at Oye could have continued longer perhaps the results for church art would have been better; in spite of the difficulty, of which Father Carroll is aware, of an art which depends on foreign and not Nigerian patronage. Nevertheless after initial doubts some Africans have begun to approve of the use of traditional-style carvings in their churches. Father Carroll does not rule out altogether the possibility of a live Christian art in the traditional style; in a very interesting section of his book he argues, contrary to the usual opinion that all African art is inspired by religious feeling, that although the traditional art of the Yoruba was associated with the pagan religion it was a humanistic art. The carvers, he thinks, do not carve in a fervour of religious faith but merely observe and describe the everyday life of the people. Except for *Esu* and *Ibeji* they carve no representations of their gods

This humanism need not necessarily disappear with the pagan religion for 'the carvers will be able to adapt themselves and their art to the life of contemporary Nigeria if they are employed to work for the people of Nigeria today.'

In Father Carroll's opinion, the artistic power of old Yoruba carvings was not due to the religious intensity or emotion of the carvers but to the development of their ability through having a constant supply of orders and by the presence of sufficient skilled carvers in a neighbourhood to build up a style and standard of execution. He has, therefore, been glad to foster the skill of the carvers working with him by accepting orders for non-Christian objects as well as works for the church. He believes that governments and architects in Nigeria should encourage traditional art by using the work of traditional carvers on buildings.

It is perhaps the moral of this book that if traditional artists get enough practice through sufficient employment their work will improve. Although the carvings specifically for the church are not very deeply moving, it is probable that many of these new carvings, especially those for secular use, would be placed among the masterpieces of Yoruba art if they appeared as unknown traditional works with the characteristic signs of age and use. Yet at the same time, probably due to the softer life of today, they lack the earlier vitality. As with other modern Nigerian traditional-style art, surface decoration is more used and more extensive than in the old works: the carvings of Bandele and Lamidi have an untraditional exuberance of decoration.

Although the use of art in the church and the survival of traditional carving are subjects of wide interest, many readers may value this book more for its excellent, clear and sympathetic study of Yoruba carving and carving technique. Little which is readily accessible has been hitherto published exclusively on Yoruba art. Father Carroll writes in a clear and easily understandable way and he avoids statements not based on sound evidence. It is a pity, however, that his subject did not require him to write at greater length on the traditional carving and religion of which he knows so much. It would, for instance, have been useful to have had more discussion on why *Ibeji* is called an *orisha:* he merely states in a footnote 'I find that the carvers and people insist that they are *orisha.*'

The book is illustrated by 129 well-produced photographs—two in colour—mostly by the author and of full-page size. They have the advantage of having been taken 'in the field' and, therefore, depict their subjects more truthfully than do many photographs of African carvings taken in a studio. Anyone interested in Yoruba art will find this book worth buying.

K. C. MURRAY

Poems

THE HISTORY SHOW. They said it. He made everybody feel miserable. Everybody—that was, of course, not the village and it was not him either. The show was thought to be over, but with him history came back and was present. Or else, he, of course, was the true teacher for his people, but before he could ever open his mouth, they told him to go. Yes, he was just that human who blocked the advancement of further lies, nationally, internationally, in one little village and all around the world.

THE STIRRING ROADS. For the man digging it, curvew and control between Lagos and that village Ikenne are signs of erosion of colonial left-overs just as the madness about his appearance and his goldpiece bringing the richness back. Sand? So sandy that all traces vanish? Traffic-jam on those roads, teaching-jam on those schools. Mayflower. Juneflower. Julyflower. Series of colonial flowers hammering traces and yet being swallowed by one beautiful human mouth who answers all miserable questions what he wants back home with the fact, that he brings richness and this time on the top of awareness and drinks with a hoe. They take his gift fast? He takes it back faster. It belongs to the country, not to hands which stir it over roads and boats out and away.

COLONIAL SERIES! Once more, whenever art is carried away and treated like a treasure and at the same time its creator pushed and hurt like some filthy dog, we are confronted with the most disgusting battle between humans. Not the battle for better living, the battle for deeper existence. Suddenly this century outlived Darwin's statement, that the aim of Life was survival and selection. On the hand-shaped perfection of survival and selection comes the brake-down. The experts recognize that the aim of life is self-expression. Now. Who has it.

Talking all the groups of ME?

But he grabbed his richness out of their hands and slipped away with it to the village and finally got the big hug for having returned and stopped that left-over submission. Now they all raise the prices for the intruders. And understand his gold-plate as the work of a man looking at the present.

THE MILLENNIUM HEAD
THE WORKING LION
THE VILLAGE BURDEN
THE STIRRING ROADS
THE PLEASURE GESTURE
THE RUMBA ISSUES
THE HISTORY SHOW
COLONIAL SERIES
HAMMERED PLAQUES
COLLEGE RELIEFS
and so on

in Ikenne

WITH A NO-BELL

With a no-bell talking Pidgin Krio BBC.
With a pressmaker talking all the groups of ME.

THE MILLENNIUM HEAD. Whenever art is stolen and at the same time the creator of it disrespected and kicked, we are confronted with the most disgusting rivalry between humans, the spiritual rivalry which reaches right down to the centre of existence.

THE WORKING LION. Sure is competition old. It is old to place the competition on visible numbers of visible objects usable or not, more is better, sure it is. And suddenly industrial symbols, old already after years, not centuries. Placed on competition.

THE PLEASURE GESTURE. Or the trick of collecting other's spirit to seem to be spirited. How easy is it to express one's attachment to ease. Industrial objects are to be bought as self-proof to be able to use the own existence just for its proof. Or turn it around. Be able to ease your existence so excessively until you feel out of existence and you have to destroy othe human's existence and steel the proof of it to keep u the ease around the whole world.

THE VILLAGE BURDEN. As the newest story of that kind goes, one came back to his village without ever having seen it, one of the ones of slavery, two hundred years of suffering far far away and when he comes back as some kind of native stranger or strange native and the village is ready to give him the big hug, the old enemy has come back too, some years before him, quite peaceful and international in the new fassade, to ask him what he wanted. Exactly that.

Talking Pidgin? Krio? BBC?

THE RUMBA ISSUES. You have to know how and dare to handle them. So he plays the wild man, the funny style man. He is an internationally known artist, yet they put him to work in the yard. And the name he is bringing like a gift is for their ears an ancient issue shooting rumba, burning blues, purely and deadly festival and they don't use the name, feel miserable and try to chase him back in some plane or boat. And the gift he is bringing like a name, a huge gilded wood-plate with his philosophy carved in, disappears in non-African hands so fast like it was some cultural bomb.

G. V. FRANKENBERG

A New Breed

Amid the maddening cries and woes of a decadent generation,
A tearful, youthful voice rises, compelling all to hearken to its call
And its call is for a new breed of virile, progressive men.

A new breed of purposeful, pushful pioneers
Who will clear the dark forest of pettiness, greed and corruption
To set once more on the path of glory the once-happy child of promise.

Not for the breed the feverish, sickening rush for gold,
Not for it the strangling death-hold of fear and superstition,
Not for it the pettiness of parochialism and the decadence of morale.

The maddening cries and woes of the decadent generation are deafening and booming
But like a hunting horn, the voice rises above the hubbub and rents the air
The voice of hope with the promise of life, the voice of a poet.

'BIODUN JEYIFOUS

Tears of God

In Vietnam they fight and fight and die,
Yes they die for ideologies and for freedom.
In 'God's Own Country'? Race riots and demonstrations
And a mad, mad struggle for 'equality and justice'.
But He, what does He do, who started it all,
Who guides Mankind down the incline of disaster and ruin?
His tears flow, yes flow for an unpenitent unheedful mankind.

The UN, SEATO, NATO, WARSAW and OAU
They all congregate to help find the ever elusive peace
Through their mortal, erring efforts.
But the Middle East is a hot bed of trouble,
Nigeria is a boiling cauldron of bubbling crisis
Ghana is groping blindly in the dark alley of reconstruction
The Far-East is ... His tears flow ceaselessly and unobserved
For an undeserving, ribald, sick mankind.

The Optimist looks to a better tomorrow, a Utopia
And the Pessimist promises perpetual unrest and final escalation
While His timeless tears flow, inconsequent and ineffectual,
As they flowed for the Greeks, for the Romans,
As they have flowed since time began and will flow ever,
Puny tears, foolish tears, wasted tears.

'B. J.

Boss

That toad, bloated, nose in the air—
What thinks he of this life?
Position, money, love, hate, procreation, death?
Then are we like the animals that we eat:
Today here, tomorrow gone; forgotten—
If that is animal man, transitory,
Why does he think so much of self?
I wish some good angel will tell me!

E. O.

READER'S LETTER

Sir,

No American Negro in an unspoiled state of mind will ever agree with your statement, that his phenomenal mental progress is attributable to his enforced contact with the 'healthy environment of industrial activity around him.' This statement will only remind him of equally stereotype statements of white Americans excusing the worst part of mankind's history by saying that the Africans were lucky to have been brought to America as slaves. No, Sir. These are illusions.

The truth is that the so-called American Negro had such a close contact with the white world that he saw much more than its beautiful facade. I think he saw it so close from within that he is just the one and the only one in the world who is able and rightful to judge it. And it is time for a judgement because so far the white world has not been judged from outside. And I assure you, this judgement of the descendants of African slaves in America will be the opposite of your statement. It will judge that his survival in that 'healthy environment' is only due to himself and in spite of his discriminating environment. He will judge that he saved himself with the development of his own creative forces and not by competing with the whites which he was never allowed to do anyway.

And if you have reasons to complain about Africans in Africa missing their mental aim, it is in my opinion due to the fact that your elite still believes in ratracing with the Europeans instead of dropping that empty image and activizing your own ideas. Imitation, voluntary or not, never leads to any satisfying result. What saved the Africans in America was their imagination. You lost yours. But to be imaginative is African. So if you admire the American Negro as you apparently do, imitate him because that way, you imitate yourself and find your way back to your roots.

I could add of course a long list of influences we had on the American way of life by retaining and developing our heritage and being imitated and watered down in it. I could also add a long list of inventions which came from us to the industrial scene without ever having been mentioned publicly. Or a long list of new ways we added to any sport, art or profession we came in touch with in spite of deadly restrictions. But maybe you got the point already. We American Negroes are free from any thankfulness!

L. C. KOLAWOLE

CONTRIBUTORS

Dr G. J. A. Ojo, the writer of *Royal Palaces: An Index of Yoruba Traditional Culture,* is a lecturer in the Department of Geography, University of Ife, Ile-Ife, and he is author of *Yoruba Culture, A Geographical Analysis* and *Yoruba Palaces, A Study of the Afins of Yorubaland.*

Miss Peggy Harper, who reviews the *Dance and Drama at the Northern Nigerian Festival of the Arts* is the Movement Director, School of Drama, University of Ibadan. She was a judge at the Northern Festival in March this year.

Mr Robin Horton, the author of *Ikaki—The Tortoise Masquerade,* is a senior research fellow at the Institute of African Studies, University of Ibadan.

Mr Renato Berger is a Swiss national, writer, lecturer and broadcaster on cultural subjects. He lives in West Berlin and contributes the review on The Black Eros.

Mr G. O. Shogbola, who writes on *Bronze and Silver Antiquities* is the curator of the Nigeria Museum of Antiquities, Onikan, Lagos.

Dr G. O. Olusanya, who writes on the *Sabon-gari System in Northern States of Nigeria,* is on the staff of the University of Lagos, Faculty of Arts; the Portrait of Ben Osawe was written by **Mrs Paula Ben-Amos** and that on Ikpomowuosa Osemewegie by **Dan Ben-Amos.** Mr Dan Ben-Amos joined the Faculty of Folklore and Folklife Programme of the University of Pennsylvania, U.S.A., in July this year.

The couple met Mr Osawe and Mr Osemewegie while doing research in Benin City. Mrs Ben-Amos studied the social role of the Bini Wood-carvers and was sponsored by the Foreign Area Fellowship Programme while Mr Ben-Amos recorded Benin Oral Tradition under the auspices of Mid-Western Universities Consortium for International Activities.

Fela Sowande, who contributes *Nigerian Music and Musicians: Then and Now* is a lecturer in music at the Institute of Education, University of Ibadan, Nigeria.

NIGERIAN PORTS AUTHORITY

an autonomous Corporation for Public Service

Head Office: **26/28 MARINA, LAGOS**
Telegrams: **GENPORTS LAGOS**

PROVIDES
modern installations
equipment and efficient
services to handle
your goods at Nigerian ports

CATERS for:
Ship repairs
pilotage
towage
buoyage and survey

For full particulars apply :

GENERAL MANAGER

PRIVATE MAIL BAG 12588, LAGOS

THE WEST AFRICAN ENGINEERING COMPANY (NIGERIA) LIMITED

30, WHARF ROAD, P. O. BOX 388, APAPA. TELEPHONE 55368, 55061.
13, ABA ROAD, P. O. BOX 595, PORT HARCOURT. TELEPHONE 21200.

ELECTRICAL WHOLESALERS

Stockists of:

*CONDUIT and accessories ¾″ to 2″

*CABLES conductors, winding wires in all sizes and types

*SWITCHGEAR and FUSEGEAR 5 Amp to 800 Amp

*MINIATURE CIRCUIT BREAKERS, Distribution boards, consumers' units

*EARTH LEAKAGE CIRCUIT BREAKERS

*ELECTRICAL ACCESSORIES for any type of installation

*LAMPS 15 watt to 1500 watt, and FLUORESCENT TUBES

*LIGHTING FITTINGS AND FLOODLIGHTS

*ELECTRIC MOTORS and STARTERS up to 30 h.p.

*MEGGERS, AVOMETERS, Instruments and Testers

*BELLS, BUZZERS, INDICATORS

*MAINS CLOCKS

*INSULATING MATERIALS

*B.L.P LIGHTNING PREVENTORS

if it's Steel look for the name JAMMAL

Builders of:

Truck Bodies Bulk Liquid Transporters
Refrigerated Railway Wagons Storage Tanks
Pontoons Aircraft Hangers Airport Terminal
Buildings Cinemas Residential Flats
Showrooms & Warehouses Workshops & Garages
Petrol Stations Fire Stations

JAMMAL STEEL STRUCTURES LTD
235/237 APAPA ROAD, IJORA, P.O. BOX 435, LAGOS.

Head Office:
112, BROAD STREET
P.M.B. 2276,
Phone: 26681,
LAGOS

Branches:
IBADAN, AKURE,
BENIN, ENUGU,
PORT HARCOURT,
KADUNA, KANO, JOS.

AFRICAN ALLIANCE INSURANCE CO., LTD.

For Future Security through Life Assurance

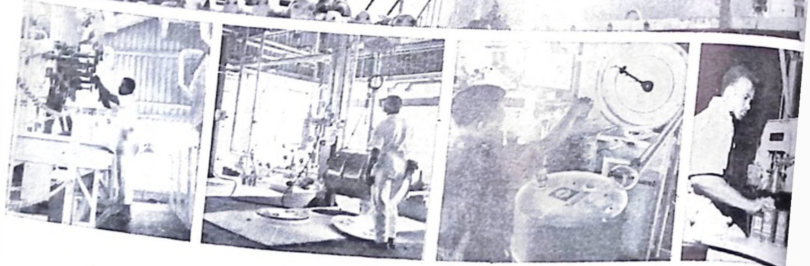
TH

30, W
13, AI

Stockis
*CONDU
*CABLES
*SWITCH
*MINIAT
*EARTH
*ELECT
*LAMPS
*LIGHT
*ELECT
*MEGG
*BELLS
*MAIN
*INSUI
*B.L.P

KEEPING PACE WITH DEVELOPMENT

SHELL



To keep in step with a rapidly expanding Nigeria — Shell have built this Lubricating Oil Blending Plant at Apapa — the first in West Africa. At a cost of £210,000 it blends six basic oil grades, with various additives, into 32 different grades of lubricating oils.

YOU CAN BE SURE OF

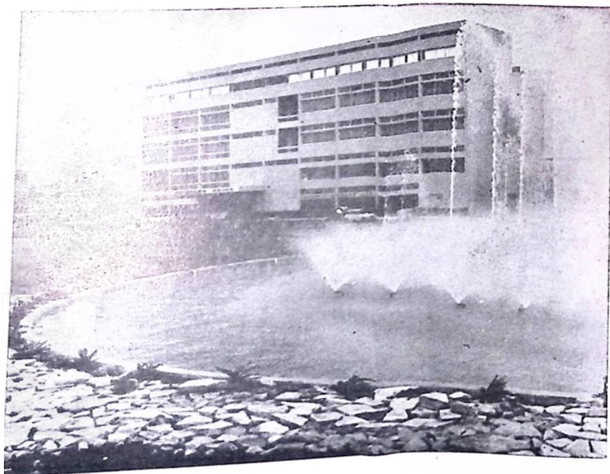
nigeria magazine

NATIONAL L... RECE... 31

No. 95 December 1967 two shilling

140 well-appointed rooms. 20 suites.
Restaurant. Private dining suites.
2 bars. Ballroom.
Full catering service.
Conference room. Spacious lounges.
Car park. Garden.
Central air-conditioning throughout.

Private bus meets all planes
at Ikeja Airport.



MAINLAND
HOTEL

2/4 Denton Street. P. O. Box 2158 Lagos Nigeria
Phone 46101: Cable: Mainland Lagos.

Nigeria Magazine

December 1967 · 95

'Nigeria' Magazine is sold at 2s a copy. Annual subscription in Nigeria is 8s post free. Overseas subscription rate is U.S. $2, elsewhere 12s including postage by surface mail. Payments made by cheques outside Lagos should bear the endorsement 'Commission to Drawer's Account' with the full signature of the Drawer thereto.

All enquiries about advertisement should be directed to the Business Editor, 'Nigeria' Magazine, Exhibition Centre, Marina, Lagos, Nigeria. Phone 20643.

The Editor is always glad to consider original signed articles. While every care will be taken, the Editor cannot be held responsible for the loss or damage of material submitted to him.

'Nigeria' Magazine is published by the Cultural Division of the Ministry of Information, P.M.B. 12524, Lagos.

© NIGERIA MAGAZINE 1967

Editor: T. O. A. ADEBANJO

Asst. Editor: A. K. METTEDEN

Business Editor: L. ALLAGOA

Offices: Exhibition Centre, Marina, Lagos.

Telephones: 23134, 26592, 20643

Telegrams: Ednigmag, Lagos.

COVER: *A Tiv Dancer in action at Dodan Barracks, Lagos on return from EXPO 67*

Contents

Ijo Funeral Rites, 279

Oshogbo Art In London, 288

Changing Art of Africa, 291

The Agbo Festival, 293

Nigeria In the World of Art, 301

To Expo 67 and Back, 304

African Art In Epe, 330

LITERARY SUPPLEMENT

Books, 338

Urban Tradition in Yorubaland, 344

The Author in the Commonwealth, 351

Poems, 356

Contributors, 359

easons why

IESS

or you

LN-GU38-6248

IJO FUNERAL RITES

By

Dr E. J. Alagoa

A close view of the EBEBEGE *or divining frame, broken and placed on the grave together with pieces of broken plate used in the* EGELE IDERI *or going down of the war songs ritual. Note modern wreaths at the back*

INTRODUCTION

THE planned trilogy on Ijo funeral rites begins with an account of the burial of His Highness Francis Ossamade Joseph Allagoa, M.B.E., O.O.N., M.H.C., Mingi X, Amanyanabo of Nembe who died on 2nd March, 1967. There are differences between funeral rites for the kings (*amanyanabo*) of the city-states of the Eastern Niger

Kalabari, Bonny, Okrika), but also
c to the Ijo culture that underlie
these Ijo ideas concerning death
ed in a last analysis of a
l dirges in a number of places
western delta. A second article
y revealed some of the obvious
n the eastern Ijo States and
erly Ijo ethnic units. A descrip-
val for a dead chief in the Apoi
in Okitipupa Division of the
ld serve that purpose.

ROCEDURES

-, the tenth Amanyanabo of
ingi dynasty which has ruled
th century, died in hospital at
nce he had been an honoured
tholic Church (knighted by the
tion in March 1954: O.O.N.-),
mass was held for him before
dy was conveyed to Nembe by
cts had already heard the radio
l sent representatives to Port
the body. When he arrived
of Sunday March 5, his cere-
iger, gleaming with its serried
, was already in the water
led the launch carrying the

aid in state at the King's new
some eight hours before being
c square, Owusegi Polo (Play-
). Two nights of wake-keeping
t by Christian groups, and then
style. During these two days
n state in a huge gilded bed in
ated with rich clothes (*ikagibara*
th, *egebesi*—velvet, *seri*—silk).
e was surrounded with the
lems of all the lineages or war
town. At all hours of the day
omen together with the King's
relations sat within the special
l dirges or performing various

On the afternoon of the third day (Tuesday March 7), the body was again moved to another square, Opupolotiri (Central Public Arena). Round the square stands the mausoleum (*okpu*) of most of the past kings, and this would be the centre of all succeeding rituals. All of the evening of the seventh was taken up with the last tributes of the King's children, relations, chiefs, subjects, and friendly neighbouring people in money, clothes, and drinks. A traditional wake-keeping with songs and dances followed.

The graveside rituals took place between three and six on the morning of the eighth. Burial had to be before dawn. Roman Catholic, and then Anglican internment prayers were offered. Then the grave area was cleared of all strangers and the final traditional rituals performed.

For seven days from the ninth, the ceremony of offering wine to the ancestors (*Kamo*) was performed morning and evening. And each afternoon, a group of dancers or masqueraders played in honour of the King. The special mourning house (*Obololoyewari*), where special representatives of the King's family, and all the lineages of the town were ritually fed, would also continue for fourteen days. (It would be seven days for ordinary people). But the dancing would continue almost indefinitely, especially as delegates of surrounding towns came with their own troupes.

Since many of the King's children and relations had hurried from work in distant places by plane, helicopter, and launch; and because of the uncertain political situation, some of the rituals were postponed. These include the Mingi dance (*Mingisegi*), launching of the war canoes (*omungu aru dogu*), the feasting of chiefs and House Heads (*alapu dina*). A head of the royal herd of cattle had been killed for the strangers during the funeral and a second would be slaughtered for the chiefs' dinner. It was also planned to open the Mingi X marble mausoleum (*okpu*), at that time.

OBSERVATIONS

One may ask how the customs binding the detailed performance of so many ritual acts are remembered. There is, of course, the common

A group of masquerade headpieces (Angalapeleyal) played by the Ogbari lineage

explanation of transmission by instruction from one generation to the next. But in such matters, the direct knowledge derived from the eye-witness experience of a previous performance is equally important. These two methods of transmitting tradition overlap, since the elders of this generation who pose as eye-witness experts had also received instruction from the elders of an earlier generation. Most of the elders who directed affairs at the funeral of Mingi X, had seen and heard the procedures at the burial of Mingi VIII, Frederick William Koko in 1898, and of Mingi IX, Anthony Ockiya, in 1936.

But as important as the methods of transmission of custom were the aids to memory. Elders' remembrance of what they had seen and heard was aided by the fact that the ancient and continuing customs had an underlying rationale. The ritual acts were carried out according to a number of simple principles which guided their performers — even where the exact meaning of particular ritual acts and formulae are forgotten.

Some of these principles were, first, that the King being the embodyment of his people's character, was also the bedrock of their culture, and all ancient customs must be observed at his burial—in some form. Second, that such observance was in the positive interest of the dead King, since he would not otherwise meet his ancestors on an equal footing. To ensure his acceptance by the ancestors, he must be made to be like them. Third, that since the King was ruler of every group within the community, procedures and rituals must be all inclusive of the society and strictly representative of every interest.

While these principles were aimed at preserving custom, they also permitted of changes to conform with changing times, attitudes, and the tastes and expressed wishes of the deceased King.

On the principle of making the King acceptable to and like his ancestral peers, one of the rituals performed while the body lay in state was that of sculpting the teeth (*aka kara*). It was the custom in former times for the people of standing to chip their teeth so that each tooth stood on its own. And since this custom had been lost, the King would look different from his peers in the other world—all of whom had had their teeth sculpted. A number of women were, accordingly, paid to carry out a ritual sculpting which consisted simply of going through the motions of the process in a symbolic manner, close to the head of the corpse.

Similarly at the grave, two objects, a type of mat (*oro*) and an ancient form of coffin (*ikpataka*) were buried along with the modern metal coffin. And a model divining frame (*ebebege*) was broken and placed on top of the grave—alongside the wreaths. Each of these objects was symbolically significant.

The *oro* was significant as the finest type of mat made in the delta in which alone the coffins of Kings were wrapped for burial. The corpses of commoners were wrapped in coarser types of mat, such as *akparakpa*, *ojigo* and others. *Ikpataka*, the coffin constructed out of the straight tender stems of mangrove and ropes, has become a symbol of traditional burial after wooden and metal coffins were introduced. In the burial of Kings, it has become the practice to make huge *ikpataka* into which the modern coffin containing

A son of the king's sister dressed to represent the dead king, performing with two spears during the kamo ritual at the public square. In the background is the OKPU *mansoleum of the king's great grandfather, king Boy Amain, Mingi V*

A small group of women singing praises at the dead king

the corpse is placed for burial. For Mingi X, only a model *ikpataka* was constructed and placed on the metal coffin in the grave.

The divining frame of bamboo fronds, *ebebege*, is still important in ritual practices in many parts of the Ijo delta. It consists of two straight fronds joined at the middle and ends by three shorter fronds. It was carried by four men for divining. It was customary at funerals in Nembe to construct one to enquire from it the cause of death, the place of burial and other matters. To the middle cross frond of the *ebebege* were tied: some toe and finger

Some of the lineage representatives fed at the ritual mourning house—GBOLOLOYE WARI—*being placed in position at the sacrifice of a ram to the deceased*—OBORI PELE. *At the far right* (*sitting*) *is the man representing the king*

nails, hair, a part of the tongue of the deceased, and a medicinal twig, wrapped in the leaves of a shrub (*ekuekue beri*). These things were believed to give the *ebebege* frame power to move the four men carrying it and to answer questions put to it.

The actual divining is still carried out in certain places and among certain groups. But in Nembe funerals it is now generally thought only necessary to make a model, break it as the real one used to be broken, and place the twisted remnants on top of the grave. That, accordingly, was done as part of the funeral rites of Mingi X.

Some of the rites were specifically aimed at easing the reunion of the King with his ancestors. One was the ceremony of 'the going down of the war songs' (*egele ideri*). A select number of persons representing lineages moved from the main square to the water front and back four times. They sang a number of dirges in archaic language; songs described as 'weighty' (*iku anumo*). Finally, they called out *Orugbo*. The meaning of this and other words of the *egele ideri* ritual are largely unknown, but it sounds very much like a formal announcement to the ancestors that another King was on his way to join them.

The *Kamo* ritual in which a son or other close relative of the dead King poured wine round the main square on seven consecutive days is easier to understand. This clearly demonstrates the reunion with the ancestors. On the last day, the young man is possessed by the spirit of the deceased King and enters all the shrines and visits the graves of former Kings. This satisfies all that the rituals have been accepted and the spirit of the King was one with the earlier Kings. The rites that still remain, Mingi dance, launching the war canoes, and dinning the House Heads, also symbolize the high office of the deceased and his oneness with all leaders of the community, dead or alive.

But there was a further rite which gave public indication of the acceptance by the deceased himself of the ceremonials carried out at his funeral. That was at the sacrifice of a ram (*obori pele*). The behaviour of the animal after its head has been severed indicated the feelings of the deceased. If it lay dead without motion, that was a sure sign of displeasure.

The unity of the people symbolized by the King was shown in every public performance from the flags on the square to the representation in the mourning house *Gbololoye Wari*. All private quarrels were forgotten. The *Sekiapu* Masquerade club of Bassambiri danced side by side with that of Ogbolomabiri—two rival sections of the town. Further, every town in the district and surrounding area sent representatives. The principle was extended to the Christian groups so that the Roman Catholic, Anglican, and various African Churches observed wakes.

INNOVATION

The smooth and easy blending of the obvious innovations with the traditional ceremonies shows that this is not the first time changes have been accepted into Nembe custom. Clearly, African traditional life and culture permitted of change, and was not static.

In the Niger Delta, the pace of change has vastly increased in the past hundred years; Christianity being one of the most important agents. The Church Missionary Society was established in Nembe at Twon in 1868 by Bishop Crowther, following his success at Bonny in 1864. The first impact of the new religion on royal burial ceremonies occurred in 1879 at the death of King Ockiya, Mingi VII. A civil war broke out between the Christian party and the rest of the community in which each side took hostages. A compromise was reached for each party to perform its funeral rites on the King who had turned Christian only in his last days. Since then it has been established in Nembe to permit Christian performance of coronation as well as burial rites alongside the traditional ceremonies.

There was striking evidence during the funeral that there still exists a strong resistance to changing the age-old traditions; that for change to be accepted, it must establish powerful claims to validity. Mingi X had lived at the Tombi quarter of Nembe, founded by his great grandfather, King Boy Amain, Mingi V, between 1830 and 1846. He had only settled there after exorcizing spirits, whose presence on the site had made it a 'bad bush' (*sei piri*). Burials were not permitted in such areas, and although Tombi had ceased to be 'bad bush' for over a hundred years, the prejudices against it have not completely disappeared.

Accordingly, strong protest was raised when the King's sons suggested burial in his new house at Tombi. The chiefs had first accepted the suggestion, and the grave had begun to be dug. The youth and entire populace turned against

A full view of the grave with temporary canopy. A mausoleum OKPU *will eventually be built over the grave; to serve as shrine and memorial*[1]

the decision. Their opposition was based mainly on the past reputation of Tombi, but also on the fact that no Kings had ever been buried there, or outside the part of the town around the main square. In the end the grave at Tombi had to be covered up, and burial took place at a site claimed to be the grave also of Opu-Basuo, father of the first Mingi (Mingi I).

CONCLUSION

This brief discussion does not give the details

The drum-master on the talking drums calling out the praise titles of the ancestors at the scene of the Kamo festival (drink offering to the ancestors)

of rituals, but attempts to show the continued vitality of traditions among the delta peoples. Modernization and innovation are permitted with great discrimination, especially when it concerns the ancient institution of kingship. And the area of funeral rites is probably one of the points at which traditional culture is most conservative. There are inevitable variations of the Ijo cultural based in the different kingdoms of the delta in accordance with local history and conditions.

At Nembe, the funeral celebrations reveal the degree of regard with which the King was held. The zeal and length of the celebrations, the songs composed in praise and mourning, are a clear index. In the case of Mingi X, the entire community mourned a king who has made a strong impact on its history. He had won not only the people's respect, but also their love. Although brought up in the hinterland, and unable to speak the language, he was an embodyment of the essential characteristic of the delta peoples, rarely that of taking greater joy in sharing than in mere acquisition. He has found a final resting place among his ancestors, and in the hearts of his people.

I received information from Madam Adelaide Allagoa and Messrs Charles Abaye and C. Allagoa.

OSHOGBO ART IN LONDON

By
ROY DEAN

'Mother Earth and Children' by Yemi Bisiri

'Friends' by Asiru Olatunde

The work of eight Nigerian painters formed the main part of an exhibition of modern art from Africa which was staged at the gallery of the Institute of Contemporary Arts in London, from 17th March to 18th April.

The exhibition, organised by the Transcription Centre, London, documented the work of African writers and artists. Other artists taking part came from the Sudan and Ethiopia, and the 30 items on show included oils, pen and ink drawings, sculptures, and reliefs in beaten aluminium.

The Nigerians were Yemi Bisiri, Michael Bandele, Rufus Ogundele, Adebisi Fabunmi, Muraina Oyelami, Asiru Olatunde, Twins Seven-Seven and Jimo Akolo—all Yoruba artists from the Mbari Mbayo Artists' Club at Oshogbo.

A film on art in Oshogbo made by Mr Ulli Beier and Mr Frank Speed, the medical photographer at the University of Ibadan, was shown at the I.C.A. gallery one evening in conjunction with the exhibition.

---

† *Miss Margaret Richards reviews the exhibition at the Institute of Contemporary Arts on page 291.*

'Ibe King Cock in Ibembe Forest' by TWINS SEVEN-SEVEN

'Unknown City' by ADEBISI FABUNMI

CHANGING ART OF AFRICA*

By
MARGARET RICHARDS

TOO many people on the Left are sentimental about African art simply because it is African. Worse, they sometimes think of it in terms of those phoney mass-produced carvings, made to appeal to tourists who like to imagine Africa as an exotic land full of spear-holding warriors, kept safely outside the hotel grounds. This is not entirely their fault, for we rarely see anything else.

An exhibition of Contemporary African Art was held at the Institute of Contemporary Arts, 17–18 Dover Street, W1 which can be looked at in two ways. First, from the purely aesthetic angle, one sees a varied and sophisticated array of individual vision and personal styles. Secondly, one sees evidence of a changing art, groping towards a means to express modern African experience.

The important fact about the ICA show in art history terms is that there is figurative painting here at all. This by itself shows how far artists have broken away from the rigid forms of traditional carving or Islamic abstract pattern. But that is only the starting point. Ten artists were represented; I choose five to illustrate what I am trying to say.

Yemi Bisiri is a Nigerian brass caster, born in 1910, who still works as a traditional craftsman, making cult objects for a secret society (which the catalogue tells us, many politicians find they have to join if they are to be acceptable to their electorate). His formal representation looks familiar to anyone who has seen the Ife heads in the British Museum, but the style is freer, getting away from what we should call academic correctness. (Again quoting the catalogue, 'His baroque exuberance shows that, although an illiterate village craftsman, he also forms part of the enthusiastic generation that fought for and won independence.'

Ibrahim Salahi, 37-year-old Professor of Art in Khartoum, trained at the Slade School in London. He has shown work all over Europe, and is represented in leading American and Australian galleries. He retains a strong surrealist and expressionist vision, acquired abroad, but has modified it to meet Sudanese artistic traditions. In 'The Woman, the Bird and the Pomegranate,' Europeans see demon-haunted, brooding presences, looming out of dark deserts, menacing and atavistic. But they were evolved intuitively from Arabic calligraphy, whose underlying shapes mean more in an Islamic country than figurative allusions.

At the other extreme are two Nigerians of 23 and 21, who started to paint in 1964 at the Mbari Art Workshop in Oshogbo (a town of 12,000 'the centre of the Yoruba Theatre Movement'). They do not rely on European buyers, but 'decorate palaces...and petrol stations.' Both use bright strong colour in two-dimensional surface-covering pattern. Adebisi Fabunmi, a former actor now a curator at the local Museum, has a quiet, contemplative vision. His 'Chameleon' camouflaging itself in the foliage is the nearest thing I can think of to non-anthropomorphic identification with a non-mammal. Urbanized Europeans need to see this kind of painting to realize how cut off we are from other animals. Where we see them through field-glasses, or as things to own, to pet, to shoot or simply to fear, this African artist knows them as creatures with whom we share the earth. Far more exuberant, more animistic, and with strong references to folklore, are the fantastic birds and spirits of animals painted in complex decoration (like Scottie Wilson's) by Twins Seven-Seven, a dancer who runs his own band and theatre group.

Lastly there is Asiru Olatunde, born around 1922 in Oshogbo, who seems to me the best artist here. He differs from the younger men in being a highly skilled craftsman with long experience as a

---

*Culled from INSIGHT, No. 18 October–December, 1967.

blacksmith. He makes aluminium panels that roll out a story like a carpet, in strips (like Trojan's column). Calm and classical in their confidence, the design and the figures are very simple. Even when illustrating a fable or an idea, the figures are fully alive, as in 'Friends', where a Christian cross and a Crescent of Islam, a Lion, Antelope and Cat take their places with Men of different tribes and religions. This is symbolic and sounds terribly corny, but the honesty is neither naive nor assertive. Olatunde works with complete integrity, his thoughts directed to internal Nigerian problems of tribal and religious feuds. His positive approach is one which Quakers would understand.

I am not surprised to learn that Olatunde receives commissions to work 'on church doors, bar fronts and decorations in Barclays Bank.' For though his preoccupation is wholly African, he presents a non-revolutionary and stable view of life which the international economic establishment must find reassuring. This brings me to my main reservation about this show.

There is evidence here of self-respect and confidence, which must underlie any evolution in art. There is also evidence that artists in Africa need to unlive European aesthetic influence and work back to their own aesthetic roots, in order to find a spring-board to present-day expression. But expression of what? The whole continent of Africa is beginning to speak with twentieth-century voices, yet there is nothing in this exhibition to suggest that artists are conscious of the airborne world of diplomats, technical experts, engineers and teachers, of militant political groups, of erupting social and economic change. Artists know that forms derived from other people's experience lack conviction: like the spectacle of African judges sweating in the black robes and full-bottomed wigs of eighteenth-century England in the heat of the tropics.

To find robes (*i.e.*, art forms) that express more than a mere assertion of equality with one's former Colonial rulers is a matter of inter-communication between artists and people and the world as a whole.

Of course African artists know this: some of them militantly so, within the African art world. But knowing it intellectually and bringing it about creatively are not the same thing, and the first is far easier than the second.

The most interesting information gleaned at the ICA is about the Mbari Mbayo Artists' Club at Oshogbo which helped to organize this exhibition. Writers and poets, actors and artists meet and stimulate each other here to experiment and criticize. From centres like this, artists in Africa are working to evolve forms of expression which Africans themselves will recognize as genuine Contemporary African Art.

THE AGBO FESTIVAL IN AGBOWA

By

Ebun Okesola

THE *AGBO* FESTIVAL is celebrated by the Ijebus, but with slight variations to suit every town depending on how the rituals had been handed down to each town.

Last January, in Agbowa, a town thirty-eight miles from Lagos, the Federal Capital of Nigeria, the *Agbo* festival was celebrated with great pomp and pageantry. According to history, this festival came to Agbowa through a woman called Efunpotun, who got married to a man called Maran a native of Epe and Iwopin. Madam Efunpotun was very much fascinated by the *Agbo* festival when she went to Iwopin with her husband to watch the festival, which was then celebrated annually at Iwopin.

When Madam Efunpotun returned to Agbowa, her home-town, she told the elders of the town all about the *Agbo* festival and what she felt about it. The elders of the three sectors of the town met and decided to send a delegation to Iwopin to watch the ceremony the following year. But only two of the three sectors of the town chose representatives — the *Aledo* Sector selected four men and the *Oriwu* just one man. The third sector of the town — *Itun Agbowa*, showed no interest at all. These men went to Iwopin to watch the *Agbo* festival the following year.

This delegation returned from Iwopin with even more fascinating stories than those brought by Madam Efunpotun. The elders of Agbowa were so interested that they sent those men back to Iwopin to find out how this *Agbo* festival could be handed over to them. The elders of Iwopin, considering the fact that one of their daughters was married to a man from Agbowa town, handed over the rituals without much ado. All this was believed to have taken place during the early part of this century—that is, between 1904 and 1907. And this was how the *Agbo* festival came down to Agbowa, from Iwopin—a town in the Ijebu-Waterside.

The *Agbo* is a Goddess and is represented by a female masquerade. As all respectable women in Yorubaland must be married, so it is that the Goddess *Agbo* has a husband. All attention is focused on the mask and headgear of the female *Agbo* masquerade. Her headgear is a charming carving of the head of a Yoruba woman with a beautiful hair-do. The headgear is heavily ornamented with beads and ear-rings. She has protruding and exaggerated buttocks. Her feet are coated with camwood with strings of shell-like jingles tied round her ankles; and these jingle as she dances. In her left hand, she holds a white horse-tail, and in her right hand, a wooden sword.

The mask is made up of several expensive wrappers which are tied round the *Agbo* with such intricacies, that no matter how rigorously she moves, none of the wrappers will become loose. The top mask is made to look like a big shawl. This is the most beautiful and most expensive of all. It is often studded with beads and very expensive ornaments. This shawl is thrown round the *Agbo* masquerade with one of the longer sides sewn in such a way to cover the neck, on which the headgear rests.

The male *Agbo* is called *Ajeiye* — meaning, 'Bird-Eater', because he, as a man must run round the town playing pranks — like chasing some people just for fun. But what the *Ajeiye* is really after are fowls. The *Ajeiye* is accompanied round the town by a group of singers and *apepe* beaters. When this masquerade or any of his followers sees any fowl, they all run after it and catch it. All fowls collected in this way belong to

An AGBO *Dancing*

the masquerade and his followers. Of course they kill the fowls and feast on them later on.

As the male masquerade has to be agile, his mask and headgear are not as cumbersome as those of the female masquerade. They are simple and unattractive. His feet too are coated with camwood, and he also has the jingles round his feet. He holds a wooden sword and also a white horse-tail as well.

The moment the elders of Agbowa town decided they were going to celebrate the *Agbo* festival, they sent word round to their sons and daughters far and near. Immediately this was done, as many of them as possible returned to Agbowa town to hold meeting with the elders of their sector. There and then they decided how much they would spend on the festival. By the end of the meeting, each family knew just how much they would have to contribute financially. Then the elders of the three sectors met and fixed the date for the festival.

Nine days to the festival, a masquerade called *Okoro* came out to announce to the public the day fixed for the *Agbo* festival. This announcement by the *Okoro* is very important, because without it, there will be *no* festival. A day before the festival began, another masquerade called *Alegbagba* came out of the fetish grove. He went round the town, accompanied by some followers. His duty was to cut down all bunches of plantains whether ripe or unripe, anywhere he saw plantains growing. His followers collected the plantains, and these were later consumed by them in their grove. But before returning to the grove, the masquerade *Alegbagba* came to the traditional square where all ritual dances were held. There he met the elderly drummers who were already awaiting his arrival. He danced the traditional steps and retired into the grove.

At midnight the men who would perform all the rites at the grove left Agbowa for Ikosi—a fishing village three miles off Agbowa town. Somewhere on the lagoon is the *Agbo* fetish grove. These men took with them all the things for the offerings and the paraphernalia of the *Agbo*. Some of the things needed for the offering are—palm-oil, a tortoise, snails, kola-nuts, some drinks and doves. The man who performed all the ceremonies at the grove held the title *Akanran*. The *Akanran* offered these things to the Goddess *Agbo* in turn with prayers for all the good things they needed in the town. Before the last prayers

Back view of a female AGBO—*She is surrounded by people from her Sector*

An AGBO *dancing at the traditional square followed by the three men who guide his movements*

(Below) The AGBO *pays homage to the elders after each rhythm as in the picture*

were said, the six masquerades—two from each sector — would have been dressed. When the *Akanran* was about to say the last round of prayers, he would hold a dove in one hand. The moment he released the dove, the paddlers pushed the three canoes right into the lagoon. They rowed towards the shore without looking back as this was forbidden. In the canoe were the six masquerades, drummers, singers and paddlers. Each canoe was gaily decorated with buntings and flags. The oars were coated with camwood. They sang and beat drums and moved their oars in rhythm to the music. Gradually they paddled ashore.

Although women were not allowed to follow them into the grove on the lagoon, those who were to receive them were women, and they all held the title *Alagbariko*. By 6 o'clock in the morning, the whole populace were at Ikosi—the fishing village. There was very little sleeping done by anyone in Agbowa town, the moment the men left at midnight.

When the masquerades have been welcomed ashore, another group of women, who held the title *Osoko* performed more traditional rites. Then the masquerades danced in turns the traditional steps.

When all the rites had been performed at the shore, the masquerades, the title-holders, the singers and the drummers joined those who had come from their sector to await their arrival. The six *Agbos*—three males and three females—were led into three gaily dressed lorries which had been transformed to look like canoes. These three lorries which belonged to the three different sectors of the town had been colourfully decorated, each sector trying to outshine the other. In each of these vehicles were installed a loudspeaker, an electric fan and an electric motor which generated power to operate those things, as well as light the coloured bulbs which were hung right round the lorry.

Inside the lorry sat the drummers and singers,

One of lorries transformed to look like a boat: The gaily dressed dancers are seen on top

The AGBO *being led out of the square by his guides after a successful performance*

who held oars which they moved rhythmically like they were on the lagoon. The driver sat in his place and he moved the lorry gently, because there were both male and female singers and *apepe* beaters who surrounded the lorry. The top of the lorry was remodelled so that it looked like the deck of a big ship. At both ends of this deck stood flamboyantly dressed female dancers. They too held horse-tails. There were effigies of *Agbo* masquerade on each end of the vehicle.

In the middle sat the masquerades surrounded by a few men who fanned them in turn and also guided their movements when leaving and returning into the lorries. These lorries were driven into Agbowa town slowly amidst great rejoicing, as they called on their way to Ado, Koyo, *Oju Aje* and *Oju Eku Nla* and *Oju Itan* to pay homage to the five gods to whom these groves were dedicated.

All the old and unused *Agbo* paraphernalia were kept at *Oju Eku Nla*. But at *Oju Itan*, a tortoise must be sacrificed along with other things, like kola-nuts, palm-oil, etc. The *Akanran* cut the tortoise into two with one stroke. Then facing the direction of Agbowa town he offered prayers as he rubbed the right and left big toes of each *Agbo* masquerade, turn by turn, with the blood of the tortoise. Then the masquerades stepped on the palm-oil which has been poured on the ground during the pouring of libation to the gods, and they moved out of the grove into their vehicles. Everybody now danced into the town and right into the traditional square. Then one by one, the *Agbo* masquerade danced to three different kinds of music. By the time the masquerades finished dancing, everybody was tired and the townspeople danced towards their respective sectors.

The dancing and feasting continued, but the masquerades who had been on since midnight retired, and other people who had been trained to dance these steps were masked again. Even some fathers taught their little sons the art of dancing to the traditional *Agbo* music.

There was nothing more impressive than seeing the young teenage masquerades dancing gracefully and correctly these complicated steps. The ordeal of the first day of ceremony was so much, that fresh *Agbo* masquerades did the dancing, morning, afternoon and night, the following day and on the morning and afternoon of the third day, which was the last day. The three female *Agbo* masquerades who were driven into the town from Ikosi fishing village, came out in their best and the most expensive of their masks, for the finale.

There were three different types of music to which the masquerades danced. The first was the *Ulale* music. One man sat on two drums which he beat in turn with the left hand. In front of him was the third drum—this he beat with a stick, and it gave the highest note. It is a pity that it is only the elders who knew all the beats to this rhythm — the *Ulale* music. This music was slow, rhythmic and pregnant with meaning. To this music, the masquerades tread heavily and arrogantly as they danced, moving their heads and hands according to the messages put across to them by the drummer.

The second type was the *Kederi* music. This was faster and more blended with music. The first drummer was joined by another drummer who beat just one drum with two sticks. And, of course, the *Agbo* masquerade danced briskly to the music.

The third kind of music was the *Adon* music. This was not only brisk, lively and melodious, but was blended with many musical instruments — the women with the aluminium pans, the bamboo (or *apepe*) beaters all took part in the *Adon* music. It was with this music they danced round the town always. The first two rhythms carried with them the air of reverence and dignity.

Why should a town spend so much money, time and energy on such a ceremony? Why is this ceremony performed at all?

The people believed strongly that when strange

The sound of the Jingles on the ankles of the AGBO *being recorded*

After a successful dance people from the AGBO'S *sector come to courtesy to the* AGBO *while the elders watch the movement*

things — like sudden deaths of young, middle-aged and old people, untimely deaths caused by plague or diseases like smallpox, joblessness and misery, become rampant in the town, they must go and appease the Goddess *Agbo*. While this festival is being celebrated, childless women open their hearts to the Goddess *Agbo*. By the end of the celebration, these women and all those afflicted one way or the other, and in fact everybody would go away with a firm belief, that by the following year all their requests would have been granted.

I was told that children born after the *Agbo* festival were usually very handsome. Any child born with knotted hair was believed to have been a special gift from the Goddess *Agbo*. The parents of such children must perform certain rituals before the knotted hair could be cut. And this is where the two sectors — the *Aledo* and the *Oriwu*, showed their seniority over the *Itun Agbowa*, which did not show interest in the festival during its early celebrations. The *Aledo* sector who delegated four people to Iwopin to find out about this festival holds the most senior titles and the members hold on firmly to most of the original paraphernalia handed over to them by Iwopin.

This of course led naturally to competition between the three sectors. And this is why each sector would go all out to present the best singers, drummers, and *Agbo* masquerades. Their songs reflect all the happenings in the town, favourable and unfavourable. Anybody who had misbehaved would be abused and those who had done good things for the upkeep of the town were praised. And this in a way throws some fear into the minds of evil-doers. Nobody enjoyed being ridiculed during such festive occasions. As this is a very expensive festival, it is celebrated every other year. But when there is some unrest of any kind in the town, the elders usually arranged for the rituals alone to be performed without the grandeur.

If misfortune hits the town shortly after the celebration, the townspeople, especially the women, would cry out that all the rituals had been carried out, with unclean hands—meaning that the *Akanran* or the other title-holders must have been guilty of something or other.

NIGERIA IN THE WORLD OF ART

By

'Kunle Akinsemoyin

NIGERIA made its impact in the World of Art in 1897 when the bronze and brass heads and statuettes found in Benin by the British Military Expedition were taken to Europe. Then in 1912 a European traveller, Frobenius, made Ife bronzes known to the outside world.

These art treasures were very much admired and ranked among the great art of the world. Consequently, the culture of Ife and Benin has a strong claim in being the most famous of the old civilization of the African Forest. The magnificent art practised in the two towns for hundreds of years soon became widely known in the world for their style, excellent workmanship and great beauty which was a unique combination never seen before. Some of the finest of the works of Art are thought to have been made in the fourteenth century and to portray the heads of rulers.

Archaeological excavations in 1939 revealed that these works of art are not confined to the Western part of Nigeria, some have been found in a village called Igbo-Ukwu about twenty-five miles south-east of Enugu in the East-Central State. A lot has yet to be found out the most important being whether the complicated method of bronze casting was original or learnt from, for example, Ancient Egypt one of the places where it was practised. Even if this latter were the case what is indubitable is that the art and style are the product of original inspiration.

Esie: Stone Head

Terra-Cotta Head—Ancient Ife

Like everything purely African these works of art are still enveloped in mystery, the mystery created by the highly developed naturalism with its rules for finding lengths based on reason. And what is more there is no real evidence to suggest any extraneous influence. However, it is not unlikely that the naturalism could have developed from the earliest culture which has so far been discovered in Nigeria—the Nok culture, named after the village near Jos in the Benue/Plateau

Nok Culture: Terra-Cotta Head

State, where in the course of tin mining operations some life-like heads of baked clay, later identified as fragments of terra-cotta sculpture, were found.

These terra-cotta fragments, including parts of statues, were found all over the southern half of the plateau and sporadically over a large area to the south and west of it. Most of them are small and the remaining few are almost life-size. They are not, as they looked, mere sketches of a human head but well modelled specimens. Some of them could almost be portraits of particular people. Indeed, there are marked resemblances between them and the well-known heads of Benin and Ife, which is quite interesting. Could it be that the people of Nok were the fathers of a tradition of Art which has been carried on in Western Nigeria to the present day? Without doubt the fragments of terra-cotta sculpture were from an ancient but highly developed and remarkably homogeneous art style which fuses naturalism and abstraction in a most imaginative way.

Very little is known of the people of Nok but other things belonging to them have been found like stone hoes which showed they practised agriculture and an iron axehead. Scientific tests carried out on geological specimens excavated confirmed by Carbon-14 tests on associated fossil trees reveal that the Nok culture existed from about 900 B.C. to A.D. 200. This was the period of transition from the Neolitic or latter phase of the stone age when ground and polished stone weapons and implements were used to the siderolithic or early part of the Iron age when iron weapons and implements replaced the stone ones.

Apart from the terra-cotta sculpture, the Bronzes and brasses of Ife and Benin, there are the Tsoede Bronzes, which included the third largest bronze casting ever to be found in black Africa were discovered in the villages of Jebba and Tada; the stone figures of Esie, a remote village in Northern Nigeria; the Igbo bronzes which have elaborately detailed designs and are in some ways even more remarkable examples of the bronze-caster's art than the Ife ones, found at Igbo near the east bank of the Niger; the woodcarvings from Afo across the River Benue and the masks of Wamba about halfway between Jos and the Benue reputed to be the most beautiful of all African masks.

All these works of Art have made it possible for the world of today to know the people of Nigeria through the artistic expression of the essential beliefs of the existing societies, a thing which is hardly possible in the European world

Ancient Ife: Bronze Head

of the present where the categories of society have become discrete. Consequently, though the modern artist still contributes an important facet to European culture, it is by way of individual comment and criticism on society rather than the expression of its essential beliefs which is the aftermath of the Romantic Revival. Furthermore, one of the great attractions of Nigerian Art in the modern world is its completely 'non literary' quality and its freedom from the intellectual conceptions characteristic of Western academic art from which modern European art has been unable to free itself.

In other words, Nigerian art is concerned with the ineffable and that its essential qualities are not subject to interpretation in words. This is art in its truest sense and the hold of Nigeria in the world of Art depends on her works of art retaining these elevating qualities.

Tsoede Bronzes: Figure of a woman

Lower Niger Bronze: Figure of a man

The Head of the Federal Military Government and Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces of Nigeria, Major-General Yakubu Gowon chats with a Tiv dancer after the performance at Dodan Barracks on return of the Cultural Troupe from EXPO 67. Behind the Commander-in-Chief is Mr A. K. Disu, Director of Information

TO EXPO 67 AND BACK

THE world's greatest exhibition in 1967 saw something of Nigeria's rich cultural heritage during the celebration of Nigeria's National Day at the Canadian International Exhibition (Expo 67) on 12th October, 1967. Nigeria fully participated in the exhibition which attracted more than forty-five million people in eight months.

Nigeria was represented at the National Day celebrations by two delegations. The first delegation was led by Rear Admiral J. E. A. Wey, who

Soloists lead the Itsekiri dancers on to the stage at the Apollo Theatre, New York

represented the Head of State, Major-General Yakubu Gowon. The second delegation was a Cultural Troupe of forty-five performing artistes and one official. The Cultural Troupe consisted of the Tiv dancers group, the Itsekiri dancers group and the Ogunde Concert Party.

In Montreal, the Troupe put up five performances. There was a Press Preview at Expo 67 Press Centre on Wednesday, 11th October, 1967. On Nigeria's National Day on 12th October, there were three performances, two at *Place des Nations* before one of the largest crowds ever present at any National Day at Expo 67. The National Day at Expo 67 was rounded up with a party given by Rear Admiral J. E. A. Wey at which the Cultural Troupe also supplied entertainment.

The Tiv dancers gave a variety in song and dance. Their dances depict human and animal behaviour and movements in the Tiv area.

The Itsekiri women dancers also gave a variety in song and dance, with most of their songs in praise of their ancestors and natural rulers. The crux of their performance is formation dances and splendid display of body movements.

Ogunde Concert Party put up a play on the Yam Festival in the Yoruba Kingdom at which the Oba betrothed one of his daughters in marriage to a rich old man. The princess apparently did not like the engagement. She ran away from her new husband's house and was brought back to the palace by *Esu* (the devil). The Oba consulted the Ifa Oracle. The *Babalawo* (fortune teller) said the

Two Itsekiri dancers at the performance for the Commander-in-Chief at Dodan ***Barracks****, Lagos*

(Below) Itsekiri dancers in action at the Apollo Theatre, New York. On the right is Chief O. E. Idundun, leader of the group

Itsekiri drummers in action at Dodan Barracks, Lagos

(Below) Three Itsekiri dancers in a variation dance at the Apollo Theatre, New York

The drummers, the bugler and bellman of the Tiv dancers group in action at the Apollo Theatre, New York

Be

princess would be found but advised that she be allowed to marry a young man of her choice as the gods were not in favour of her marriage to the old man. This constituted a dilemma for the Oba.

Before the Oba could come to a decision however, events soon sorted things out. The old man died and the princess was free to marry the young man of her choice.

On 13th October, 1967, the Cultural Troupe gave its last performance in Canada at the Shopping Centre of Montreal.

The Troupe stopped-over in New York and London on its way back home and performed for American and English audiences. In New York, the Troupe gave two performances at the Apollo Theatre and in London, one performance at the Commonwealth Institute Theatre.

Back home, the Troupe performed for the Commander-in-Chief, Major-General Yakubu Gowon, at his Dodan Barracks residence before splitting up and returning to their various stations.

A Tiv dancer in action at the Apollo Theatre, New York

The Tiv dancers entering for their performance at Dodan Barracks in Lagos

The Tiv dancers in two variations during their performance at Apollo Theatre, New York

The Oba and his wife watch dancers at the Yam Festival at the Dodan Barracks, Lagos

The old man, husband of the 'princess' goes to the Oba to complain about his missing new wife—from the Yam Festival by Ogunde Concert Party at the Apollo Theatre, New York

The youngman, lover of the 'princess' is given a rough treatment for trying to seduce the old man's wife

The old man, husband of the 'princess' comes face to face with his wife's young lover

The BABALAWO *consults the Ifa Oracle on the missing 'princess'*

The missing 'princess' is found and brought back to the palace by 'Etsu'

The head of the 'princess' is washed to drive away from her mind evil intentions according to the advice of the BABALAWO

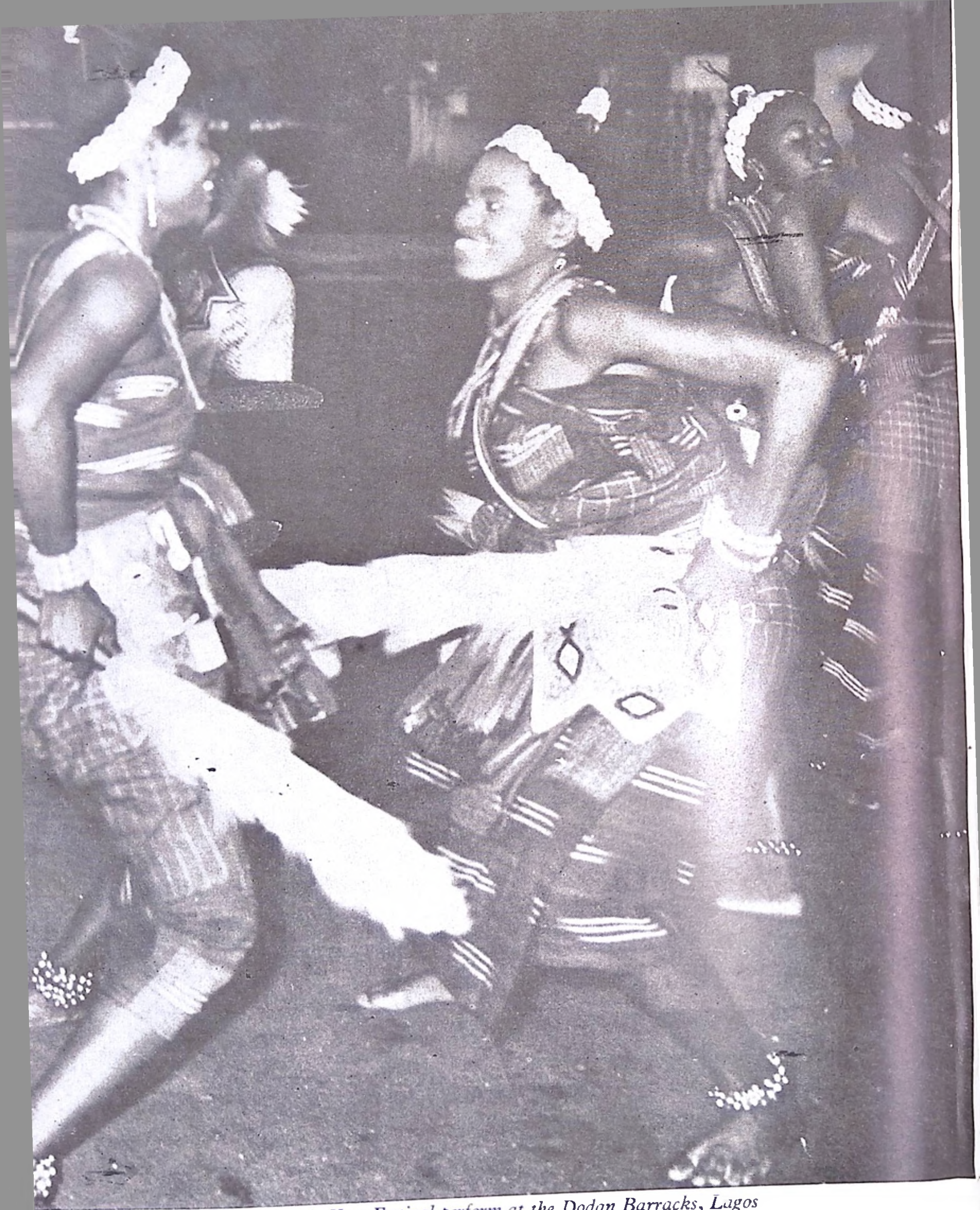
(BELOW) *The 'princess' wins her young lover at last and the Oba performs the ceremony and betrothal*

The 'pri
cess' a
her n
husba
dance b
fore t
Oba
the Y
Festiv

A dancer at the Yam Festival

Nigeria's Consul-General in New York, Alhaji Ahmadu-Suka makes a speech at the Apollo Theatre, New York before performance by the Nigerian Cultural Troupe to EXPO 67

Dancers at the Yam Festival



Two dancers at the Yam Festival perform at the Dodan Barracks, Lagos

The 'princess' in a solo performance at the Yam Festival

Another dancer at the Vam festival

Tiv dancers at a party given by Rear Admiral J. E. A. Wey on Nigeria's National Day at Expo 67 in Montreal, Canada. (BELOW)

The Itsekiri dancers at Rear Admiral Wey's party in Montreal, Canada. Third from right, Rear Admiral W admires the dancers

The Itsekiri dancers at PLACE DES NATIONS *at EXPO 67 on Nigeria's National Day*

Rear-Admiral J. E. A. Wey decorated by a dancer from the Ogunde Concert Party, returns the complement at a party on Nigeria's National Day at EXPO 67

The Commander-in-Chief greets an Itsekiri dancer at the Dodan Barracks, Lagos

The Ni[illegible] High Commissioner in the United Kingdom, Brigadier B. Ogundipe (right) and Mrs Ogund
(second from left) with the Tiv dancers in London

The Itsekiri dancers at PLACE DES NATIONS *at EXPO 67 on Nigeria's National Day*

Rear-Admiral J. E. A. Wey decorated by a dancer from the Ogunde Concert Party, returns the complement at a party on Nigeria's National Day at EXPO 67

The Commander-in-Chief greets an Itsekiri dancer at the Dodan Barracks, Lagos

The Nigerian High Commissioner in the United Kingdom, Brigadier B. Ogundipe (right) and Mrs Ogundipe (second from left) with the Tiv dancers in London

The Commander-in-Chief greets a member of the Ogunde Concert Party at the Dodan Barracks, Lagos. Behind Major-General Yakubu Gowon is Mr A. K. Disu, Director of Information

---

AFRICAN ART IN EPE

By

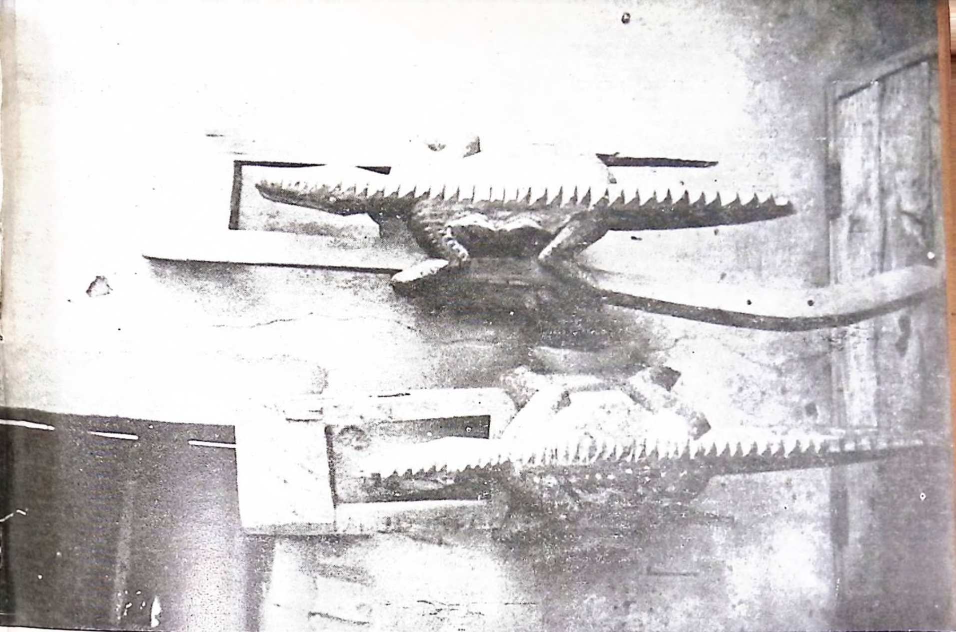
A. ADEOGUN

IT is not difficult to think of what would happen to fine pieces of works of art used during religious ceremonies, should the worshippers turn into Christians or Moslems. They would normally perform a ritualistic iconoclasm, or find a good market where, by selling them, the converts can make some money. This process may be true in the case of individuals or groups of people. But where a whole town or groups of villages are concerned, one can still find devoted and ardent worshippers ready to continue with the indigenous religious ceremonies, when in fact others have deserted to join the modern Christian or Moslem sects.

The case of Epe is a peculiar one. The town is a lagoon town formerly administered by the Western Region Government, now under direct administration of the Lagos State Government by a recent decree. Epe lies about 22 miles south-east of Ijebu-Ode with a population of about 45,000. The people of Epe are predominantly Christians with Moslems claiming the remaining half.

The works of art in Epe have not gained much publicity and importance because it only forms a part of a larger collection generally referred to as 'Creek Masks' with peculiar features. Nevertheless reference has been made to them in the past in connection with the Okosi Festival in Epe.

An aspect that strikes one in connection with Epe works of art is that they are predominantly head masks connected with water spirits. Their



ONI (*Crocodile*) *a completely new addition to the set of masks used during Ebibi festival. This set was added by an age-grade about* 1957, *has no long-time origin like the* IGODO *or* AGIRA

features are mostly therianthropic, although sometimes the explanation of a feature may entail a lot of mysticism. These three aspects, with the exception of the last have been pointed out by Robin Horton in his recent work, *Kalabari Sculpture*. This may lead to a general impression that these features are typical of Creek Masks! What is most striking about the place of indigenous religion in Epe, is the way other social institutions have been adapted to maintain a psychological balance between the new faiths and the old one. It is interesting, equally, how this attitude is reflected on the different masks that are kept in the *Eku Agbo*, a general store house where masks used in the celebration of *Ebibi* Festival are kept.

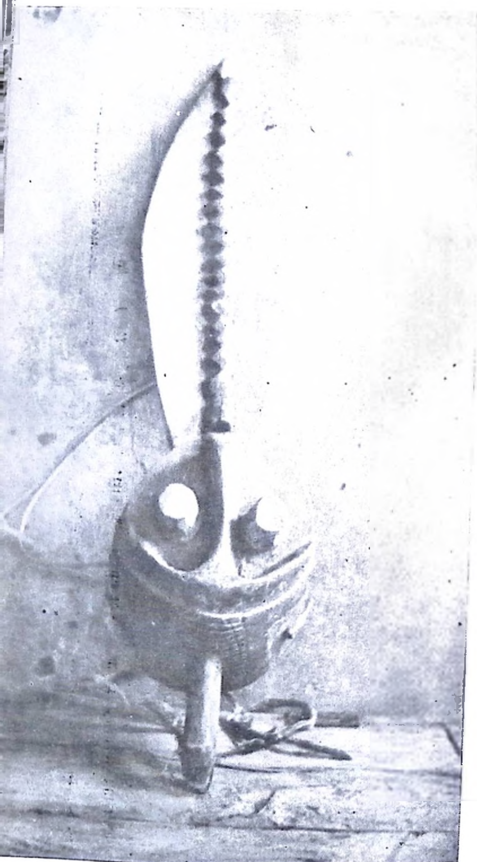
Under what is generally termed *Igodo Masks*, there are over thirty different masks with different designs on them. The general misconception in the past that these masks belonged to a single cult also led to the wrong idea that the riverain masks are mostly associated with water spirits. I shall not delve into a detailed analysis of the different types of masks found in Epe, but I shall only point out that ancestral shrines with masks typically designed like those belonging to the water spirits are kept, whereas these shrines are in no way connected with the water spirit, either by legend or otherwise. An example may suffice here. The *Imole Ajoji Apewawo* is a mask that is reputed to be connected with the *Ekinne* Festival but it is of inland origin.

To present a list of all the masks in the *Eku Agbo* will make the exercise quite unwieldy. Some of these will be mentioned and some striking examples cited to illustrate the changes that have taken place. The significant ones are *Igodo*, *Agira*, *Akalagbile*, *Agbo*, and *Oni*. These are the traditional masks, known to belong to the whole town, of a common possession as distinct from the new

ones whose ownership is limited to members of the same age-grade.

The age-grade system as a social institution, has been used to propagate the course of traditional religion. The structural difference between the traditional masks and those carved by the members of the same age grade will lead us to show also that changes have taken place over a period of time in the general emphasis on aspects of a mask.

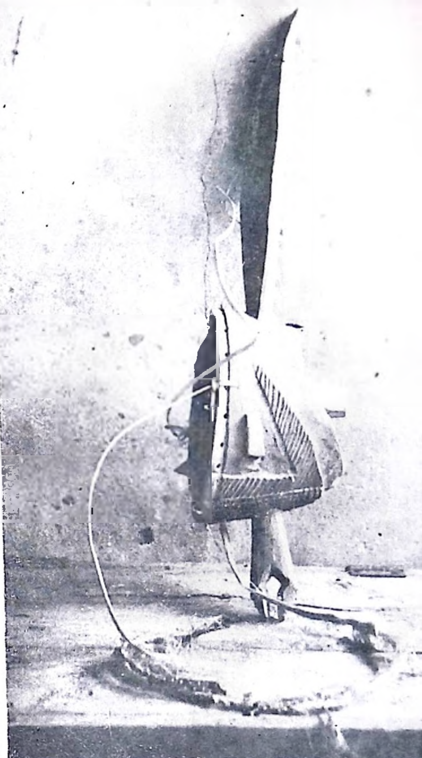
If we take a new *Igodo* mask and an old one and make a structural comparison, the following



Photograph showing an IGODO *mask. Carved probably about forty years ago. The features are typical of carvings along Creek areas of Nigeria. The whole facial appearance depict that of a water spirit as it was seen in the olden days*

IMOLE AJOJI APEWAWO, *with design structurally like the* AGIRA *but of inland origin*

Close up on c of the mask. Shows clearly the resemblance of a h man face but the outstanding features at right angle to the body of the mask is only typical of the masks from the Creek area



Side view of IGODO *mask, showing the box-shaped hollow into the head is fixed. The mask is largely therianthropic, notice the beak of a bird below the mask*

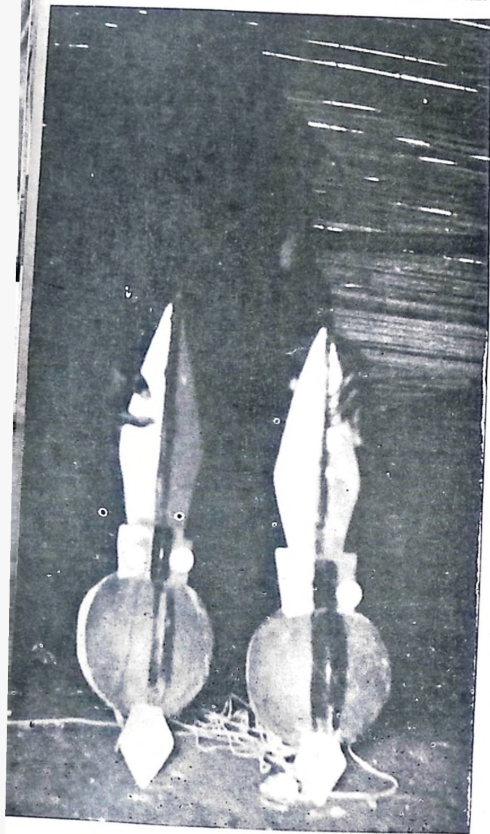
alterations are revealed. The new mask obviously does not show any feature common to the 'Creek forms' at all. The eyes are not fixed in the same place as in the older mask, the facial features are smoother than those of the older forms; the lower bulging part, where the masquerader is expected to fix in his head, is of a round shape. The general refinement made on a new *Igodo* mask, in form of painting and finer finis depict that emphasis has shifted from a purely religious one to that of beauty and presentability.

Another stricking example is the *Agira*. Photograph No. 10 where the older one is shown, a specific image of a water animal is depicted. The new *Agira* is shorter and of an unspecified form. The features still show the eyes, the two horns and the hollow part into which the masquerader fixes his head. To a casual observer these two masks do not seem to belong to the same class at all. They do not even seem to show the same bearing of features. When the mask is worn it has a long horizontal form on the head of the masquerader. This shape is one of the common features among the 'creek masks'. Generally the features on the new mask emphasize the aesthetic features more than anything else.

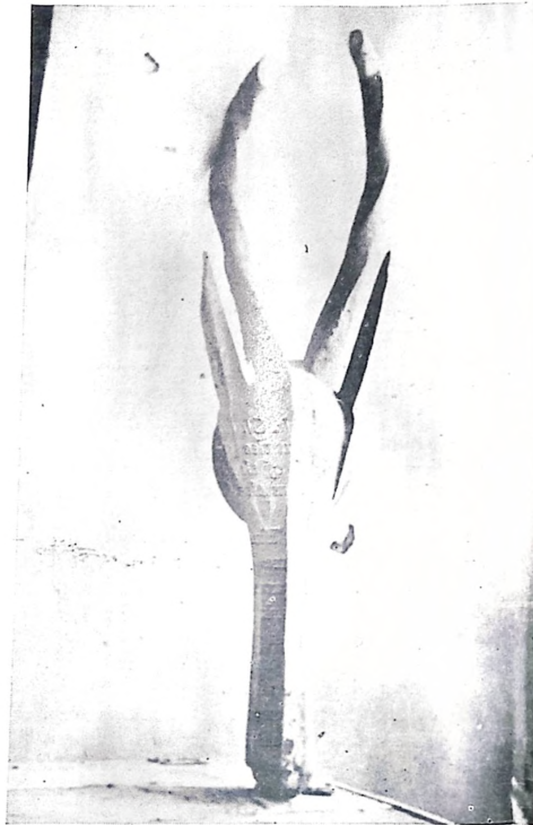
Basing on these two examples we can make general statements. We can locate the source of these changes within the society itself. Generally the form a work of art should take is dictated by the owner. The source of the changes cannot be located in the wish of an individual because the

wish of the society is the wish of the gods or spirits. This gives us an idea, that when the society perceives a change to which there is a general tendency among the people, the change can be refined to become that of the gods.

So far, certain facts have been revealed. The ancient institution of age-grade, usually three within a period of time is more of an association of young people. They take part in general preparation for the *Ebibi* Festival. This social institution has undergone a change and has become the strongest influence as far as the propagation of indigenous festival is concerned. In the olden days, these age-grades are supposed to provide the supply of man-power for labour around the cult-house. Apart from this, their function covers political and social assignments. They were not expected to perform religious functions as a group, although individuals may belong to certain cults.



A new IGODO *mask, carved Jan., 1966. Notice that the eyes are no longer in the exact position. This pair is no doubt more beautiful than the older one. There is no doubt that the aesthetic aspect is emphasized more than anything else here. This pair belongs to the age-grade of 1966 at Abeke Quarters of Epe*



AGIRA, *mask connected with disastrous storm on the lagoon. It is believed that the long horns are used to turn the sail of boats on the lagoon. No reason is given for its animal feature, but probably connected with a sea animal*

Today, the most elderly grade is expected to present the mask with which *Ebibi* festival will be celebrated. There are two prominent quarters in the Ijebu-Epe sector, namely *Aleke* and *Ebode.* Each quarter tries to beat the other in the canoe competition, as well as in the decoration of the mask.

The competition is not between the quarters alone. It is also between the age-grade taking up the leadership this year and that bearing the responsibility next year. Thus the age-grade connected with the expenses this year tries to prove superior to that of last year by presenting a more interesting *Ebibi* festival and more beautiful pieces of mask for the masqueraders. The general impression is that the most interesting *Ebibi* festival will always be remembered and narrated to posterity, hence the desire to out-do the age-grade of the previous years.

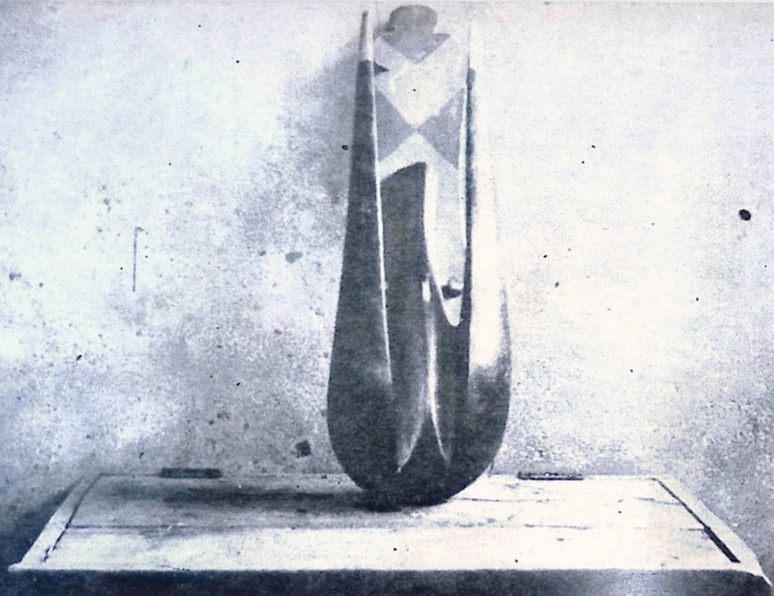
The reason for the change in form and features on masks thus becomes obvious. Firstly, the effort to make an indelible impression on the people by the age-grade in power this year leads to more emphasis on the aesthetic features, presentability and finis, rather than the traditional features, of the mask. Secondly, the general pattern of change from a predominantly religious institution to a socio-religious one makes room for less emphasis on traditional forms. This point leads to another interesting topic. The age-grades have now a more or less integrating influence between traditional culture and the new culture. Both Christians and Moslems who are natives participate in the reparation for the festival with no fear of sanction from pressure groups. They do not perceive their participation in the celebration as paganism or lowering of status as probably they might have been inclined to feel if they were not involved in the age-grading system. They see their participation as an event in their lives, taking its normal course. Money is contributed during meetings held regularly towards meeting the cost of carving masks and general expenses during *Ebibi* Festival.

The celebration also takes a form which can not be described as paganism by either Moslems or Christians. This is due to the fact that, generally, everyone who is an indegene of Epe automatically becomes a member of an age-grade. Such a situation has led to the absence of a pressure group whose sanction would be most effective in discouraging people from participating.

The adaptation of the age-grade system to that of a socio-religious institution thus accounts for the loss of emphasis on the features of water spirit to that of beauty. We must take note of the general consequences of such an attitude towards traditional religion in Epe. It is true that *Ebibi* Festival is gradually becoming a social institution, celebrated for its fun, pomp and pageantry. This attitude, thus leaves the younger ones taking active part in the preparation for the festival while leaving the wearing of the mask to the elder folks. A prediction is difficult to make in as to whether *Ebibi* festival will survive in the long run even as a social institution, when all who are interested in wearing the mask are dead. The question is, will sufficient people be interested in wearing the mask each year in order to carry on the festival. Probably no age-grade will like the festival to flop during its own time, but another problem will be whether there will be enough sanction to make individuals stoop to wear them.

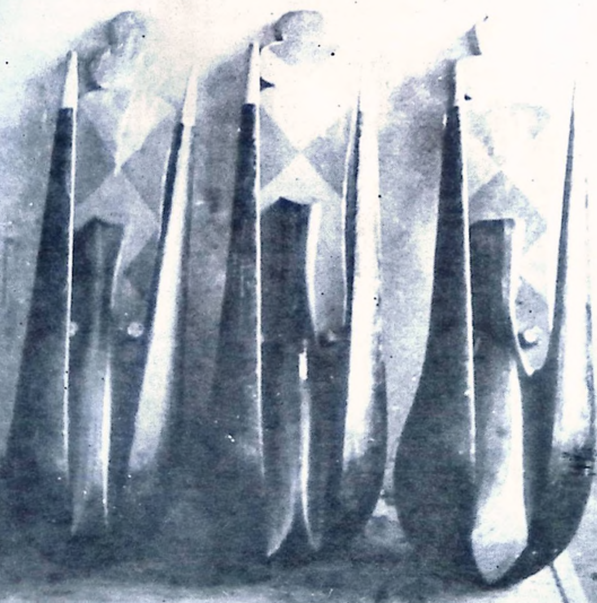
The general departure from traditional pattern of mask carving is continuing with each successive year. *Ebibi* Festival becomes more interesting with newer masks replacing that of previous years. The general impression is that the festival is a vivacious but dying social institution. It is vivacious because it exists with enough pomp and pageantry, still with its aspects intact, it is dying because it cannot afford to be lively for too long.

I am grateful to the Department of Antiquities for financing the project in Epe and the Creek areas so far, and for useful advice from members of the staff.



Back view of new AGIRA *. Notice multi-coloured pattern on it, and finer finis*

(Below) The three in a set of new AGIRA *mask*



Nigeria Magazine

Literary Supplement

Books

NEGRITUDE AND HUMANISM

By

LEOPOLD SEDAR SENGHOR

Published and translated from French by Janheinz Jahn Edition Eugen Diederichs, Cologne 36s.

READING the book for the first time one is overwhelmed by the abundance of thoughts, ideas, opinions; all sorts of senses are called on: intellect, feeling, emotion, sometimes even passion, so that one is inclined to ask for an orientating compass or a guide which may conduct the reader through this abundance of unusual, extraordinary and fascinating material, and give him the answer to questions which fortunately are not yet contained in the musty filing cabinet of European cultural history.

At a first glance one may be offended by the continuous use of the word negro: negro-art, negro-music, negro-soul, the 'new negro', the psycho-physiology of the negro. Now we scarcely have learnt that this word should not be used because of its discriminating undertone; here it is used again, but consciously and with a newly developed racialism. Even with its positive interpretation, this continuous appeal to the race does not seem appropriate, and the combination negro-African which is used for the non-Arabio-Berberian Africa sounds like a duplication. The attentive reader of *Nigeria* Magazine knows another word for the so-called black Africans or the Africans South of the Sahara which has been created by JANHEINZ JAHN in its *History of Neo-African Literature*: 'Agisymbians';* but this expression will scarcely become popular. So one asks: Why not simply say Africans as everybody says and understands? If one speaks of the Arabio-Berberian Africans, it is possible to differentiate.

The first pages still keep the reader's mind sceptical: they could have been written by a Christian missionary who sees negroes, Negritude, Black Africa or Agisymbia through his Christian spectacles. When one remembers that Senghor, on the contrary, wants to conjure up an Africa, not yet influenced by European or Christian civilization, the following quotation of Father LIBERMANN in this text is a stumbling block *par excellence*: 'Be negroes amongst negroes that you win them for Jesus-Christ!' This quotation on the other hand is like a fixing anchor to which African culture, art, philosophy, religion are still attached. In spite of the most passionate creeds for Negritude and African personality I hold that the last conclusions have not yet been drawn, conclusions perhaps which may be able to refloat the boat of an African rebirth to the shores of a new age. I will speak of it later on.

A little more at home in Africa one feels, when Senghor describes the 'negro-society', that means the social structure of African society, whose highly ethic and democratic character is not yet known in Europe. The kernel of this structure is the family around which society is built up 'in concentric, superimposed circles. Several families form a tribe, several tribes can form a state and several states can join a confederation or a nation.'

The attitude towards property is very informative: 'The soil and everything it contains by nature—rivers, streams, forests, animals, fish—belong to the community and are shared amongst the families or sometimes even amongst members of the families which have a temporary right of possession or use. On the other hand, the general means of production, the working-tools are property of the family-group or the corporation. The conclusion of this structure sounds very similar to the

*Nigeria Magazine No. 90, p. 238, *History of Neo-African Literature*.

pronounced promises of European socialism or Communism, the only difference is that they have not yet been fulfilled: 'Every individual is materially without sorrows, he gets the minimum of his means of existence following his needs.' Senghor's remarks considering the role of labour in African Society is informative above all on the background of the somehow violent philosophy of the apostles of social justice: 'Labour is not enforced but it is the source of joy because it permits the realization and development of every individuals' being.'

The passages about the position of the African woman can shame the critic of a country where women have not yet the right to vote, namely Switzerland. The African woman's position is equal to the man's, except for the Arabio-Berberian society, this means the Islamic one in which the woman has a lower rank. 'This position is in connection with the agrarian character of the black world, which appoints the woman as donator of life, as a source of life force and the guardian of the house.' In most of the African tribes, the woman is also financially independent by some kind of trade which can range from the selling of nuts and cigarettes to a bazar with turnovers of a thousand pounds a month. With entitled pride, Senghor therefore writes: 'Contrary to the current opinion, the negro-African woman needs not be liberated. She has been free for centuries.'

Senghor is in his element when he speaks of art, literature and culture. In Africa, each of these domains reaches far beyond the strict demarcation which they have in Europe. All the arts, all social functions and their philosophical background arise from a common source: religion. On this sector the reader is surprised how completely Senghor is influenced by French civilization. This civilization has made of him not only one of the greatest poets, scientists, thinkers and —very important for the French people—a writer of an impeccable style (Senghor was asked by the French Government for the stylistic revision of the French Constitution) besides this he has become a grateful pupil and a big admirer of the French civilization which for him is exemplary and unique for the whole of Europe. A kind of melancholy is expressed when Senghor complains: 'How can we express it (Negritude) in the grey language of the engineers and diplomats?' and in another essay he apologizes for this exclamation and praises French as the language of the gods. There is no doubt that Senghor uses French with a god-like easiness. Penetrated by the fresh source of his Negritude, his style is enriched by quite new tones. In front of a real orgy of erudition—amongst which we find expressions like hypallage, metonymie, katalaresy, paronomasy, homeolute, etc. I suddenly remembered the European hat which President Senghor wore during his State-visit to Nigeria and which I could not yet forgive him. On the background of the mentioned erudition and this European hat, the orgiastic vocabulary of the adepts of Negritude—'here all is blood, sperm, body, tights, buttock, hill and fruit' —suddenly seemed to be nothing more than a sort of vitality of the writingtable, the same to which JEAN-PAUL SARTRE, ANDRE BRETON and other Europeans addict them selves, making a lost paradise out of this mysticism of blood and sperm. This impression strengthens in front of African intellectuals who are no longer able to make a single dance-step and who—especially the atheists among them—are very sceptical about these hot and sensual melodies of Negritude.

Negritude—Senghor understands it as being typically negro-like. Of course, it can also exist in other cultures, but not so evident, 'nowhere united in such an equilibrium and splendour.' He characterizes Negritude as 'the presence in the world, the participation of the human being in the cosmical forces, the communion of the individuals between themselves and moreover with everything that exists, from stone to God.' At the same time, Senghor sees the humanism of Negritude in the mentioned traits which reach beyond black thighs, bare breasts and sperm to the last sources, 'to a new civilization of unity through symbiosis and symbol. Nowhere else has the rhythm reigned so absolutely' Senghor writes in connection with the difference of the Africans from the rest of the world as he postulated. 'Rhythm, that means the architecture of the being, the interior dynamism which gives him form, is the undulatory system which one being sends to the other, is the pure expression of life-force. Rhythm is the shock which creates the vibration, the force which grasps us at the roots of our essence.' Rhythm, therefore, would not only mean, what distinguishes the African most from the rest of mankind, but would also mean the pulsation of what one could call integral being, integral life, and through rhythm could happen

what not only the Africans are longing for: the going back to—or the remaining—near the sources, or briefly: religion. In this connection, one phrase of Senghor opens new horizons: 'And if one adds that this negro-African culture resembles the old Egyptian, the Drawidian and the Oceanian like a sister, I do answer that the Egyptian culture was an African culture and that in the vains of the Drawidians and the Oceanians mighty streams of black blood are flowing.' If we shift this phrase out of its controversial context into the field of the development of the human consciousness, and if we put, instead of the mighty streams of black blood—did they not flood enough?—the essence, symbols and myths of the magical and the mythical or briefly, of a new religion the anchor of the ship mentioned at the beginning, which brings us to an African rebirth in the sign of a new universality, could be weighed.

With this anchor to be weighed we touch a question which is an unprounced taboo in Africa and above all in intellectual Africa: How far is Negritude compatible with Christianity and Islam if we consider it on the background of its apostles on the one hand and in connection with the cosmical sphere on the other? 'I am a Catholic,' Senghor writes, 'but nevertheless, as a negro-African, I can see these imported religions only from outside.' This exclamation proves that Senghor is missing the connection to the inner world with its irrefutable law in Catholicism, and all Africans, I guess, are reproaching Christianity which is the subject of the famous European cultural and psychic crisis. The old Egyptians and the Oceanians as well as the Drawidians, this means the ancient Indians, did not cut the connection with the cosmical or religious sphere which, as Senghor repeatedly emphasizes belongs as an indivisible part to the whole life of the Africans.

In another essay, Senghor writes '... that European civilization which has been presented to us as "the exemplary civilization," in fact does not even deserve this name, for it is a mutilated civilization, as it lacks the dormant energies of Africa and Asia.' Maybe—and here we approach the last depths of our anchor—that Senghor does not realize the explosiveness of his phrase. Because the awakening or activation of these sleeping energies would mean nothing less than a development of African religion similar to what Hinduism of India has undergone. This three thousand years old religion which during the centuries has assimilated Christianity as well as Islam, gives to the Indian individual his psychic-spiritual sovereignty instead of which the modern African individual is 'poised between two civilization' as MABEL SEGUN complains in one of her poems, or compensated by newly acquired intellectual presumption. One is very astonished that such a universal and 'negro-like' thinking African genius as Senghor, does not draw this very logical and psychological—or negro-logical!—conclusion. At the same time we Europeans, too, are very far away from a new religio. In view of a world in the delirium of technicalization, automatization, rationalization and in an increasing spasm of rationalism and intellect, which is not cured by the manifold compensatory outbreaks and excrescences of a doubtful quality, the search for new horizons has to be undertaken jointly by Africans and Europeans in common.

In the meantime it is a real comfort to know that there exists a continent whose statesmen not only deal with Poetry, Philosophy, Art and even Dance, but who praise a colleague for qualities which in our days have completely gone out of fashion. It is GASTON BERGER who is praised by Senghor for his charm, politeness, optimism, modesty and tenderness! The French-Senegalese thinker, philosopher and diplomat, Gaston Berger, worked out the philosophy of prospective, this means, 'more a method or attitude than a science which permits us to grasp future as such in its complexity, mobility, its risks, and surprises.' In this concept of prospective, past and present are preserved, but only in so far as they announce the future. This philosophy of prospective is nothing else but a science which in the West gains increasing importance under the name of *Futurology*, only with one enormous difference; that prospective does not interrupt the connection to the cosmical, universal and human spheres, but tries to make them stronger. This is quite obvious when we know that both Berger and Senghor have studied thoroughly the philosophy of PIERRE TEILHARD DE CHARDIN. This philosophy, together with the doctrine of prospective, Senghor tries to activate for Senegalese policies as a 'philosophy of action' under the designation: African socialism. Out of this resulted 'the sense of Senegalese politics which is based on the dialogue and which, beyond the nominal independence, wants to develop a real, that means an economic and cultural

independence.'

In front of these praiseworthy and high postulates I remembered — not without melancholy — the day when I studied some of Senghor's sentences fixed on the walls of a bar in Dakar, as 'It is not enough to reform the institutions; we have first to change attitude, mind and customs.' From there my thought went back to all my money which had been stolen the first day I arrived in this city well-known for its social differences and its concomitant symptoms. A similar discrepancy I see between this perfectly well worked-out methods for solving all Senegalese problems and reality. Senghor would not be the great thinker he is if he—as all statesmen who are worried about the psycho-spiritual welfare of their people beyond the daily tasks—were not conscious of this discrepancy.

'Only one problem has not yet found its solution, that of loneliness,' Senghor writes in the preface of the novel, 'A Wreath for Udomo' by PETER ABRAHAMS whom Senghor declares the classic of Negritude. 'And it can have no other solution than the acceptance of this loneliness. All African statesmen who in one moment or the other have felt that they were in the minority in their proper party, know this. Because they precede their century. Greatness and loneliness are indivisible. That is the sad human truth.' In the face of a world addicted so completely to its most primitive materialistical excesses one may ask if this recognition really is as deplorable as that.

RENATO BERGER.

Blackie's Infant Bookshelf, Sets 1-3, *By* J. TAYLOR AND T. INGLEBY, 6*s*. each.

Blackie's Junior Biographies, Books 1-10, *By* W. CHARLES, 1*s*–9*d* each.

This Age of Communication, 166 pp., *By* R. MANVELL, 11*s*–6*d*—all published by *Blackie and Son Limited*, Glasgow and London.

Political Institutions of West Africa, 260 pp., *By* J. H. PRICE, *Hutchinson Educational Ltd.*, 17*s*–6*d*.

The Study of Africa, 444 pp., *By* Peter J. M. MCEWAN AND ROBERT B. SUTCLIFFE, *University Paper Backs, Methuen*, London, 21*s*.

Following the apparent success of their three First Grade Sets 1A–3A Booklets (reviewed earlier in *Nigeria* Magazine No. 92 of March) Messrs Blackie and Son have now issued Sets 1, 2 and 3 (18 Booklets) in, what appears to be, phonetical spelling and, this time, illustrated by a different book-illustrator—Sam Fair.

The obvious essentials which students learning English as a second language must master are its pronunciation and spelling. It is to help ease these difficulties, presumably, that the sets are issued in a peculiar form of phonetical spelling that comes nearer to the actual pronunciation.

It remains to be seen, however, whether without the illustrations facing every page containing the questions or statements, infantry school teachers who were themselves never taught phonetics in their school-days would find them convenient or easy to master.

It is quite a different story for *The Junior Biographies* intended for Top Primaries and all written in Basic English each of which averaging 2,500 words in twelve to fourteen pages.

Heroic men and women whose lives are covered by the series include such world-famous celebrities as the first Chief Scout of the World, Lord Robert Baden-Powell, Florence Nightingale, Sherpa Tenzig — an illiterate Indian of Mount Everest fame—and Amy Johnson—the brave Yorkshire girl who, in her Gypsy Moth solo the *Jason*, on 5th May, 1930 flew from Croydon to Port Darwin in Australia in nineteen and a-half days.

In *This Age of Communication*, R. Manvell traces the development of the Press, Books, Films, Radio and Television in Britain, America, Russia and on the continent of Europe and assesses the uses, or abuses, into which they are put generally all over the world.

It is, however, disheartening to learn that although writing and some form of inscription have been known to begin in earliest historical times and that, for instance, paper had been introduced to Europe from the East, since the eleventh century, half the world's population is still illiterate and that 'it is estimated that one-third of those who are claimed as literate have barely mastered the skill.' All of which goes to show that educationists, Pressmen, film, radio and television journalists as well as writers of books in all available alphabets and languages have much to do to help, in their various ways,

to eradicate illiteracy in their own areas.

The book, therefore, which contains also four tables, three charts, a suggested further reading list and index would be highly commendable to all those engaged in public enlightenment in one form or another.

A book 'written specifically to cover the West African G.C.E. Level syllabus in Government' and, of course, would appear to be indispensable to politicians or constitutional lawyers with brains to help draft constitutions, is *Political Institutions of West Africa* by J. H. Price, a former Dean of the Faculty of Economics and Social Studies at the University of Ife, Nigeria, and currently Lecturer in West African Politics at the University of Bradford, England.

The author, in six chapters, gives the general constitutional background of Ghana, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, The Gambia and Liberia to the end of the Second World War; the constitutional and political developments in these countries since 1945, the working of their constitutions up to December, 1966 and how their Judiciaries, Public Services, Public Finances and Local Governments work.

But as the author himself warns at the outset; 'The observer of political events in West Africa from the Second World War onwards will be aware that.... events move faster than the printing presses, with the result that by the time the book is published (14th August) it is often little more than a historical record', between the book's going to press and its actual publication things have changed so much particularly in Nigeria, for instance, that Nigeria has had Decree No. 14 of 27th May which created twelve States instead of the former four Regions, Ojukwu of the East had declared his secession of the Republic of Biafra on 30th May and since 7th July, plunged the country in civil war by declaring a total war on the rest of the Federation!

That, notwithstanding, the book should be of wider general interest than those to whom it was intended in as much as a lot is learnt of the different constitutions of the five West African countries including, of course, their similarities and differences and the peculiar political and tribal problems that face each of these countries. A Bibliography, Map and Index are also additions to the book which is well documented and written in easy, flowing English.

The last book, the Hardback copy of which was reviewed earlier in *Nigeria Magazine* No. 92 of March, is *The Study of Africa* which is now re-issued in a paper back at half-price, with no change in content or number of pages which should make the book more accessible to the general reader interested in African Affairs.

A. K. METTEDEN.

L. COMPTON KOLAWOLE:

A CULTURAL BOMB?

By

GISELA VON FRANKENBERG

SAME artist ... coming 'home' to Nigeria which in his dreams might have been the country of his ancestors two hundred years ago ... same question what does he want in Africa ... same goldpiece with his philosophy carved in, shown at an exhibition in Lagos among other prints and drawings ... same conclusion: a cultural bomb ... boycott ... enthusiasm ... HISTORY SHOW?

But this time I like to tell the story not as a poem, some understand poems, most do not. This time I like to put it down as review and preview. It is, for instance, interesting to try a definition whether his work is American, European, African or something new called Afro-American, since the artist is American by passport, European by education, African by dream and, after all, selfmade in the isolation of discrimination and protest. Compared with known art from either continent, his work stands quite solitary and without relationship to any of the contemporary styles. I shall refer, therefore, to his art-book which he is preparing for publication next year and first preview his philosophy before reviewing his exhibition.

The basic motive of Compton Kolawole's philosophy and art, as the following quotations show, is motion, hence MOTION-ART. For him nature represents itself not in forms, but in moving masses balanced in an eternally unfinished potential of explosive action and unlimited space, which he makes visible in images without imagery. By studying the history of Lagos

for my next novel, I find a Governor gazetting a circular in 1888 in which he asks for information upon the following subjects: the marriage customs of the people; different modes of burials; drum language; language or communications by signs and MOTIONS:—here we are. Language of motion. A hundred years ago. And nobody has yet pronounced the word Motion-Art for African Art. Nobody but an artist who never was allowed to live in Africa or come in touch with African Art. He found his tradition by mere intuition. This is quite phantastic. And looking at his work, we can now easily recognize elements; plants, animals and humans—not being danced any more in symbolic personifications by masked men to mime the motions of the world—transformed directly into visibility without losing the action by showing it as space and momentary feeling, not in time. African? The exhibition of his works held in July in Lagos was no success. The audience did not understand at all. Only some artists got very excited. The bomb did not yet explode. But wait and see. Wait for the next exhibition and the coming book. I bet my own head that this Artist will make Picasso look like a lie and any attempt to create a synthesis of Westernmost trends and traditional values a sterile illusion. Either African Art remains Motion Art, or it becomes, what it so far never was, Formalism, but then it is not African any more but becomes European. An ancient issue shooting rumba, burning blues, purely and deadly festival. Who is betting his head against mine? THE BOMB WILL EXPLODE ONE OF THESE DAYS!

'Tradition blossoms in a multitude of customs but basically it is only one thing: the philosophical backbone of a people or race to answer its disposition on earth. Our tradition, the philosophical answer of black Africa is very different from other traditions and very similar to the philosophy of nature. In the basic motive of my art I try to make this philosophy—nature's invisible reality—visible without transforming its image into imagery. THE INVISIBLE HAS NO IMAGERY. Or into symbols. Most of all it expresses the unity of space and time.'

'It has been said that shape-perception is the means of man (and other mammals) to type his vision of the world. I am ready to doubt if this is a proper generalization. In the African culture I believe another faculty was developed, the faculty of MOTION-PERCEPTION with movement playing the decisive role in registering and expressing the universe. Our figures were never shapes reduced to main essences of forms and what looked to foreigners as reductions have been quite contrary: unifications of Form, spirit and movement—unifications of the human body with their own actions and the actions of the universe. And if my art does not show bodies and faces any more so not for the reason to become abstract in the European way that is deductive or theoretical, but in order to express that our knowledge of nature has reached a deeper dimension and this not with the artificial and misleading help of science, but by intuitive experience of feeling.'

'Years ago in my journey toward HOME I adopted the name Kolawole as a name for one who was bringing richness back. The richness I believe to bring back is a new experience of vision as a new blossom of African tradition, even so it did not grow on the African soil. Thanks to the close and positive relationship we Africans have to nature, the loss of objects and customs did not do too much damage to the slaves abroad. Having nature at least in their own bodies, the American negroes stayed creative or more so: intensified their tradition beyond the medium of matter. And by going beyond matter which was refused to us by a hostile foreign society, some of us experienced for the first time with full consciousness the unity of matter and action so that the refused matter could be replaced by action which then turned out to be matter too.'

'The ideal superposition of the two opposite shifting motions Fear and Creativity should be found in a way where none is disturbing the other. To take a simple picture: two water-wave motions, present at the same place at the same time, running their courses totally independently of each other, do not disturb each other in the least and the displacement of a particle of water caught in two wave-motions at one time in an undisturbed superposition of the two displacements. Simplified for our study: the motion, Fear is causing, is a shift away from existence and the motion of creativity, one should immediately find as answer, would be a shift toward existence and if found equal in magnitude to the fear, one would remain in balance yet activity. The question which of the Masked Societies in Africa used their moving power to make people find the ideal superposition of fear and creativity, can never be answered and the way masks and figures are judged

thing to do with their real functional ... any thing which is 'opened' from shape into free space by line-design and action indicates a knowledge of the importance to keep the existence in motion.'

'The African masks and figures, once taken out of vital community process, could not offer any more the life-force, Europeans longed for, they just offered the look of it. But when after 1874 Negro-musicians started to play in Europe, they brought 'the real thing', even so the audience took their art as American, not African. They brought exactly that activity of forth— and back-moving forces—'motion'—which the masks and figures had lost, and what was missing in their music were only the African images. So that put together, Europe had completed African Art at its disposal, complete but separated. Unfortunately there was no awareness whatsoever of the tremendous chance of combing again what had been separated.'

'It has been said that African Art did to the artists of this century what the Antique did to the Renaissance-people. I can not agree that Modern European art is a result of this confrontation, I think this confrontation has been missed completely. Instead of letting himself be inspired spiritually, the artist projected into it what he really wanted to take part in: the big adventure of scientific technic, and instead of expressing life, he described the pattern—structure—and regulation—order of inside-matter. And in spite of poetic programmes, his work was recognized as that description and not rejected, since the adventure was everybody's adventure. It only failed to give what art is expected to give: existencial balance. And the less it satisfied spiritually, the more recognition it received as if to force the human well-being away from all metaphysics, or more exact, away from a due revolution of human behaviour. The art-revolution as supposition for a revolution of humanity will give art its spiritual power back. Modern European Art did not bring any art-revolution, it brought the expulsion from art. The art-revolution has been started by Negro Musicians like Cootie Williams, Charlie Christian, Howard Megee, Charlie Parker, Tolonius Monk, Dizzy Gillespie and Art Tatum. I myself carry it over into painting which I do not call paintings, but SPIRITINGS. . . .'

URBAN TRADITION IN YORUBALAND

By

R. A. Akinola

THE development of towns in tropical Africa is widely believed to be a result of European contact. Also the scale of urbanization found in some parts of Africa is universally assumed to be associated with industrialization. But much as these are true of some peoples of Africa, none of them is the case with the Yoruba who inhabit the south-western part of Nigeria. The people are remarkable throughout Africa for having organized themselves into large urban communities, long before the advent of the Europeans in Nigeria. Unlike Kaduna, Enugu, Nairobi and Salisbury which were developed as administrative centres by Europeans, the origin of Yoruba towns dates far back in history. Urbanism, therefore, is traditional to Yorubaland and the great concentration of many large towns in this part of Africa is a fascinating feature of the settlement

geography of the continent. The purpose of this article is to examine the factors that led to the existence of many flourishing cities for such a long time in a pre-industrial society like that of Yorubaland.

The Definition of a Yoruba town

Anyone attempting to define a Yoruba town is initially faced with a great problem, for there is no generally-accepted definition of an African town. Since one of the major differences between urban and rural characteristics is generally believed to be reflected in their statistics, one would naturally like to know the figures of population at which a village becomes a small town. Some authorities in Britain suggest 4,000 to 5,000 as the figure at which village mentality based on a 'primary' or 'face-to-face' group of people, all knowing each other, gives place to the small-town attitude, and this is considered to be the most significant sociological distinction.[1] In Yorubaland, statistical materials are so poor that one has to use them with great caution.

In attempting to define a Yoruba town, it is best to remember that a functional definition, as used for cities the Western World by Dickinson[2] which assumes that towns-people are primarily engaged in non-agricultural activities and that their economy is different from that of the rural population has no relevance in Yorubaland. The clear-cut distinction of people into town-dwellers and villagers, which for generations has been so well developed in Western Europe, does not exist in Yorubaland. The population of these towns varies according to the season, and to the interest which their inhabitants have in the surrounding countryside. The constant ebb and flow of population between the towns and villages is still conspicuous, and consequently the distinctions and criteria of recognizing towns in 'Western' countries cannot be applied to the study of Yoruba towns with their very different historical, social and economic backgrounds.

The chief occupation of the Yoruba is farming, and most of their towns still have an essentially rural character. The Yoruba traditionally live in units large enough to be termed 'urban' even though they are usually described by overseas visitors as extended villages simply because many of them still present a rural character. Here one needs to be reminded that size is not the only criterion for defining a town, nor is the occupational structure of a settlement a universal yardstick. Mabogunje has pointed out that despite the fact that the economic and functional specialization in most Yoruba towns is at a low level and largely pre-industrial, yet the settlements are towns in a real sense. The only problem is again one of definition, 'for towns are the products of their time and culture and must be appreciated within that context'.[1] A village is regarded as an offshoot of a town which, despite the presence of a village head, still looks to the parent town as the source of its spiritual social, economic and political inspiration.

The officers connected with the Nigerian census of 1952, in their attempt to differentiate between urban and rural settlements, defined towns as, 'those areas which are considered by the Residents of various provinces to be urban centres, each containing a population of 5,000 or more in compact area'.[2]

In Yoruba terminology, the word 'ilu' means a town which performs social and administrative functions. These functions also distinguish 'ilu' from other settlements, such as 'ileto' or 'abule' meaning a village. The inhabitants of Yoruba towns also have a sense of town existence, and they are naturally offended if one refers to them as villagers. They regard the people who live in small villages as 'ara oko' ('uncouth rustics'). There is also the sense of belonging to a particular town, hence the distinction made between 'omo ilu', a native citizen of a town, and 'ara ilu', meaning a non-native inhabitant of that town. In view of these considerations, a Yoruba town may be defined as a compact settlement of 5,000 or more people with its own chief, and which serves as a centre for local administrative, social, political or spiritual life for the surrounding villages which look up to it as their headquarters. It is in this sense, both in terms of population figures as well as in the functions described above, that the term 'town' is being used throughout this article.

In an agricultural community like that of Yorubaland, it is somewhat surprising that the percentage of town dwellers is comparable to those towns of industrial Europe. (*See* Table 1).

---

1. L. E. White, *Small towns, their social and community problems*, 1951, p. 9.
2. R. E. Dickinson, *City Region and Regionalism*, 1960, p. 25.

---

1. A. L. Mabogunje, *Yoruba Towns*, Ibadan, 1962, p. 3
2. Nigerian Department of Statistics, *Population Census of Western Nigeria*, 1952, p. 10.

TABLE 1

COMPARATIVE INDEX OF URBANIZATION—YORUBALAND AND SELECTED COUNTRIES

	Year	*Index of Urbanization*
United Kingdom ..	1951	80.8 per cent
Western Germany	1950	71.1 per cent
Denmark	1955	69.0 per cent
Canada	1956	66.6 per cent
United States ..	1950	64.0 per cent
Belgium	1947	62.7 per cent
France	1954	55.9 per cent
Yorubaland.. ..	1952	39.3 per cent
Spain	1950	37.0 per cent
Switzerland ..	1950	36.5 per cent
Norway	1950	32.2 per cent

Source: *United Nations Demographic Year-book*, 1961, New York, 1961, pp. 373–390.

From this table it can be seen that the index of urbanization in Yorubaland is very high and this raises the question of what has produced the large towns on such a scale in a purely agricultural economy. That there are so many towns on the magnitude that there is in Yorubaland is due to historical, cultural, economic and geographical factors.

Historical and cultural factors

Yoruba towns are basically exotic forms, the product of early Yoruba conquest and settlement, rather than spontaneous indigenous developments. This fact is supported by the traditions which assert that the Yoruba brought with them from their probable Near-Eastern origins certain features of Arab and Jewish civilizations, with which they had come into contact. One of these was the establishment of towns. According to Smailes,

> 'Town are extremely potent agents in the spread of culture and are among the most notable illustrations of the process whereby forms and patterns developed in a particular setting are introduced elsewhere as exotic features.'[1]

Even though Talbot's contribution on the subject is still debatable, yet it will be worthwhile to mention it here. Talbot wrote that a wave of immigrants from the East, partly of Hamitic or another brown race, penetrated by way of Borgu and Nupe country into Yorubaland about the eighth or ninth century A.D., and supplied the ruling dynasty of these three tribes. From these settlers evolved the Nupe, Yoruba and later, the Benin civilizations.

The Yoruba, on their arrival in their present country, founded Ife and other towns such as Oyo, Ijebu, Ilesha, Ondo, Sabe, Ketu, Illa and Owu. The people lived in the towns, and did their farming in areas nearby. Each urban settlement had an Oba (*i.e.* a chief or king) who was sacred. Along with the enterprising farmers, who followed the chief, came artists and artisans who brought with them their skills; these craftsmen largely depended on the patronage of the royal court.[1]

The second stage was reached in the eleventh century, when the Yoruba exhibited their political genius and organizing ability by establishing chiefdoms based upon towns which were centres of law and order, farming and trading. In this sense, urbanism can be considered as a traditional Yoruba pattern because the town was the basis of their communal life.[2]

The third stage was brought about by the frequent inter-tribal wars of the nineteenth century. These wars forced people to flee to certain towns for safety. It may be true to say that the sites of some towns, for example, those on the plains, were not easily defensible from marauders, yet it could be accepted that, with the warfare of the period, the effective defence of a Yoruba town lay more in its size than in its site. Hence, the larger towns tended to attract even more immigrants. This was the case with Ibadan and other towns that lie in a belt from Ibadan to Ogbomosho. It was here that the refugees from the towns and villages of the old Oyo Empire fled when their settlements were devastated. Many towns such as Oshogbo, Iwo and Ogbomosho became very large as a result of the influx of refugees; while Ibadan, Abeokuta and Modakeke grew as a direct consequence of the inter-tribal wars of the early nineteenth century.

[1] Arthur E. Smailes, *The Geography of Towns*, 1953, p. 75.

[1] P. C. Lloyd, 'Yoruba Towns', *Ibadan*, Ibadan, June, 1960, p. 26.

[2] William Bascom, 'Urbanization among the Yoruba, *American Journal of Sociology*, Vol. LX No. 5, 1955, p. 448.

The economic and geographical factors

The Yoruba economy also encouraged their living in towns.[1] The chief factor in their economy had always been farming. Even though the towns themselves are not agricultural areas in the western sense, there is generally a peripheral agricultural belt surrounding the city, extending as far as three to five miles outside. The farms are visited daily, and where these are relatively distant, the farmers live in temporary huts for many weeks during the height of the farming activity, returning to the towns only for the traditional festivals. Whichever is the case, every farmer retains a residence in the town, which he regards as his real home.

The concentration of population in Yoruba towns in this century is further encouraged by the fact that the soil in Yorubaland is favourable to tree-crop farming. For example, cocoa, as a cash crop, needs only occasional attention from the farmers and, therefore, it is not essential for cocoa farmers to live permanently on their farms.

The favourable climatic conditions also stimulate the growth and high production of agricultural crops. This fact has been more forcibly expressed by Miller, in his description of the 'moderate and beneficent climate' of Yorubaland. He writes thus:

> 'The area in the south-west of Nigeria which has a long rainy season with a respite, but not a drought in August, enjoys a climate which, by using both early and late rains, permits the cultivation of wet climate crops like yams (*i.e.* those requiring a long growing period); but which can also yield two harvests, in August and another in November, of crops like cotton, groundnuts and maize, that require only a shorter period. No small measure of the material prosperity and high cultural level of the Yoruba must be attributed to this fortunate climatic condition.[2]

Apart from farming, their other occupations are weaving, carving, dyeing, iron-working, leather-working, silver and brass-working, calabash decorating and pottery. Most of these crafts and services are specialities which depend on a large urban population for their demand and are, therefore, exclusively town-orientated.[3]

[1] William Bascom, *op cit.*, p. 449.

[2] R. Miller, 'The Climate of Nigeria', *Geography*, 1952, pp. 202–203.

[3] P. C. Lloyd, 'Craft Organizations in Yoruba Towns,' *Africa*, Vol. 23, No. 1, January 1953, p. 32.

Another basis of their economy is trading. In Yoruba towns, there is greater intensity of trading activities than in the villages. The size and importance of Yoruba markets impressed the early explorers, as they do foreign visitors today. Markets, which may involve exchange between neighbouring towns and villages, are generally run by women, who provide foodstuffs, native-woven cloths, livestock and other necessities for sale. There are, in addition, daily, morning-and-night urban markets, which are generally well-attended. Thus, the Yoruba have been living in large, dense and permanent towns, based on agriculture. The evidence for the age of some Yoruba towns will be briefly examined.

An Inventory of Yoruba towns before 1900

This inventory is made possible by the works of early British travellers, explorers and missionaries; by the writings of the Rev Samuel Johnson, P. Amaury Talbot, William Bascom, Dr J. O. Lucas and the works of other anthropologists who have recently made an ethnographic survey of the area, and the tradition of oral history which, despite its short-comings, cannot be ignored.

As suggested by Bascom,[1] the earliest historical written material on Yoruba towns can be found in the accounts of Benin and of Dahomey. Their records indicate that both were subjected to some political control by Yoruba cities as early as 500 years ago. For example, in 1485, when the Portuguese, D'Aveiro, first visited the city of Benin, it was learnt that the approval of one powerful king in the interior was necessary before crowning the Oba of Benin. Talbot[2] had identified this as the king of Ife. In 1668, Dapper spoke of the kingdom of Oedebo, and D'Anville's map of 1729 located Oudodo in the region of the present town of Ondo. Dapper also mentioned the kingdom of Ulkami. This, Talbot identified as Old Oyo, which was also referred to in Bosman's account of the invasion of Arder in Dahomey in 1698. Both Palmer[3] and Jeffreys[4] agreed in their conclusions that the town of Ife must have been in existence as a religious centre since 1,000 A.D., and must at that date have had lines of

[1] B. Bascom, *op. cit.*, p. 448.

[2] P. A. Talbot, *op. cit.*, p. 156.

[3] H. R. Palmer, *Sudanese Memoirs*, Lagos, 1928, Vol. III, Lagos, 1928, p. 78.

[4] M. W. D. Jeffreys, 'When was Ife founded?' *The Nigerian Field*, Stroud, No. 1, p. 20.

communication with other parts of what is today called Yorubaland.

The published journals of Captain Clapperton and Richard Lander, describing their journeys from the coast to Old Oyo between 1825 and 1828 and those of Richard Lander and his brother in 1830, contain informative accounts of the Yoruba towns through which they passed. 'A capacious walled town' and 'most extensive and populous' are the descriptions constantly coming up in Lander's journal of 1826; and in that year when they came to the neighbourhood of Shaki he made this comment:

> 'The further we penetrated into the country, the more dense we found the population to be, and civilization become at every stem more strikingly apparent. Large towns at the distance of only a few miles from each other, we were informed, lay on all sides of us, the inhabitants of which pay greatest respect to the laws and live under a regular form of government. Parties of traders and merchants, in one case numbering 1,000, were daily encountered.'[1]

The accounts of both expeditions list the names of towns and villages through which they passed, together with the estimates of their size and population. No estimate was given as to the size of Katunga or Old Oyo, but the explorers remarked that it was the largest Yoruba community which they visited on their trip. They both described it as a 'city' using the word for the first time. Clapperton described its wall as extending for fifteen miles in circumference and having ten gates. By the time Lander returned in 1830, it was already in decline, having been succeeded in importance by Alorie (*i.e.*, Ilorin), which was then larger while Boho (Igboho) had become the second town in the Kingdom. The Landers also mentioned other towns such as: Keeshee (Kishi), Chaki (Shaki), Jannah (Ijana), Puke (Ipokia), Jaguta, Egge, Chiad, Jaddo, Duffo and Arowa. Of these, only a few can be identified today.

In 1841, Crowther[2] noted the following as the principal towns in Yorubaland: Ibadan, Oshogbo, Iwo, Abeokuta, New Oyo, Iseyin, Shaki, Kishi, Illa, Awaiye, Wasimi and Ijaiye. Dr E. C. Irving,[1] who was the medical aide and political adviser to the Yoruba Anglican Mission stationed at Abeokuta, passed through the ruins of many Egba towns while he was travelling between Ibadan and Ijebu Remo between 1854 and 1855. And according to Ajisafe,[2] Gbagura, a section of the Egba, had as many as 144 towns. Bowen, who also travelled extensively in Yorubaland between 1849 and 1865, gave the estimates of these large towns with which he was best acquainted:

'Lagos (Eko)	20,000	Ajashe	15,000	Isabeh	20,000
Ishakki	20,000	Ikishi	25,000	Offa	30,000
Iwo	20,000	Ibadan	70,000	Awyaw	25,000
Iseyin	20,000	Abeokuta	60,000	Iketu	15,000
Igana	20,000	Igboho	20,000	Ilorin	70,000
Ejigbo	20,000	Ideh (Ede)	20,000	Ijaiye	35,000
Ogbomosho	25,000'				

He continued:

> 'besides these, are numerous smaller towns, containing from 1,000 to 10,000 people. The eastern part of Yoruba and other countries such as Ifeh (Ife), Ijesha (Ilesha), Igbona (Igbomina) and Effong (Effon-Alaye), have not been visited by missionaries. We are assured that there are many large towns in that region.'[3]

In addition to this great number of towns, there are some towns which have been continuously in existence for a long time. The continuity of some Yoruba towns can best be illustrated by the example of the town of Ijebu-Ode. The name of this town has appeared repeatedly in the literature for nearly five hundred years. Talbot cited a map, at about 1,500, showing Cuidade de Jabu; and Pecheco Pereira, writing in 1507–1508, described 'a very large city called Geebuu'; Alonso de Sandoval, in 1647, mentioned a very large city called 'Iabu'. 'Jaboe' was mentioned by de la Croix in 1668,

---

1 R. Lander, *Records of Captain Clapperton's Last Expedition to Africa*, Vol. 1, London, 1830, p. 109.

2 J. F. Schon and S. A. Crowther, *Journal of the Rev'd James Fredric Schon and Mr Samuel and Crowther, who with the sanction of Her Majestys' Government, accompanied the expedition up the Niger in 1841, on behalf of the Church Missionary Society, London*, 1842, p. 223.

1 E. C. Irving, *Church Missionary Intelligence*, VII, London, 1856, pp. 65–72.

2 E. K. Ajisafe, *History of Abeokuta*, Bungay, Suffolk, 1924, p. 20.

3 T. J. Bowen, *Central Africa; Adventure and Missionary Labours in Several Countries in the Interior of Africa, from 1849 to 1856*, Charleston, 1857, p. 218.

and the 'Cidade de Lubu' is shown on a Portuguese map printed in Amsterdam in 1700. Barbot, in 1742, repeated Dapper's description of Jaboe, and added that the Portuguese geographers placed Cuidade de Fubu, or the city of Fubu, several leagues inland from the Lagoon. Jabou and Jebou were shown on D'Anville's map of 1729 and 1743, Jaboo on Norris's map of 1789, and in 1793 on Datzell's map. It was further mentioned by Adams in 1821 and 1823; Clapperton in 1829; Crowther in 1843; d'Avesac in 1845; and was visited by Hinderer and Irving in 1854. It was later estimated at 60,000 by Moloney in 1890: 13,000 by Milson, and 15,000 in 1892 by the British forces. Elgee, in 1914, put its population at 21,000; while the census reports gave 21,765 in 1921, 27,909 in 1931, 27,558 in 1952[1] and 68,543 in 1963.[2]

The Plan of Yoruba towns

Most Yoruba towns have some common characteristic features which result from historical factors and which differentiate them from other towns. In order to be able to understand their present pattern, a description of the original plan of old Yoruba towns, from which the present-day towns have developed, is essential.

Nearly all of the towns started from a nucleus which gradually grew outwards in various directions. The original nucleus was followed by other settlement, then the inner town walls, followed by the communal land, then the outer wall and ditches, and finally the home forest, consequently, the early Yoruba town plan was concentric. (*See* Figure 1).

In all the older towns, some of which served as the metropolitan capitals of ancient Kingdoms, the Oba's palace was a central and imposing feature. It was generally a walled area of several acres; that of Ondo, for example, was about forty acres. The palace building was erected in a corner of the parcel of land, its site was such that the 'Oba' could watch the main road from it without himself being seen. The remaining land was usually planted with useful medicinal trees, while some areas were overgrown with bushes. The important shrines and ritual groves were usually found in this latter part of the palace yard. The walled fence was usually interrupted by four to six gates. The buildings inside the palace yard were laid out in quadrangles, and they all accommodate more than four hundred people.

Most pre-1800 Yoruba towns were laid out in a similar pattern. The streets, excepting the few that led from the gates to the market, were very narrow and they intersected each other at every possible angle. The broader streets, the markets and open spaces were shaded with widespreading trees. Houses were built of mud and covered with the thatch of grass (ekan) in the savannah or large leaves ('gbodogidi') in the forest region. They were all constructed in the same style—a series of single rooms around a large square, with only one entrance, rather in the forms of a fortress.

Every town was, until recently, fortified with surrounding walls. In some places, the walls were as high as eight to ten feet, and three to four feet thick at the base. Behind them, deep ditches were usually dug for greater security. In some towns, there were two such walls. Surrounding the houses of the earliest settlers and the markets were generally the inner walls which, in most places, were later destroyed or became dilapidated owing to neglect. This inner wall acted as the first local boundary of urban development. There was usually also the outer wall which was generally maintained in good repair.

The outer walls always had massive gates, named after the important towns to which they led. There was usually a small house adjoining the town by these gates for the collection of tools from incoming traders. The toll-gatherers' business included the inspection of all who sought to enter, and they could reject anybody who, in their opinion, could be of danger to the town. Outside the outer walls, and all round the town, there was an area of woodland maintained as a security zone against sudden attack. It was also a hiding place in time of defeat or sudden invasion, and the tall trees were sometimes used as watch-towers for the observation of the enemy.[1] The home forest was also a source of rafters for building, strong rope and, in some cases, of leaves for thatching roofs.

The concentric pattern of old Yoruba towns was dictated by historical, social and economic factors.

---

[1] William Bascom, 'Urbanism as a traditional African pattern', *Sociological Review*, Vol. VIII, No..... July, 1959, Keele, pp. 37–38.

[2] Federal Office of Statistics, *Population Census*, Lagos, 1963.

[1] Samuel Johnson, *The History of the Yorubas*, Lagos, 1937, p. 91.

Certain features—the palace, the central market, the quadrangular compound-type house, the town walls and ditches—all of which arose from the requirements of defence, social system and trade, have persisted in some Yoruba towns until the present time. The traditional pattern can still be seen in many Yoruba towns, but in others, it has been very much modified as a result of changing circumstances and needs. The advent of the British, which brought an end to the inter-tribal wars, has rendered the use of town walls obsolete, and with peace in Yorubaland since 1893, they are now in ruins, and their gates and ditches have disappeared. The home forest has been cleared except, in some towns, where deliberate efforts have been made to preserve them as ritual groves. Safety from sudden attack and improvements in transport have made it possible for people to live well outside the site of the former outer town wall, so that the land on the outskirts of the town, which was previously cultivated, is now used for urban expansion.

The Oba's palace is still preserved in the centre of most towns, and so are the principal markets. These, with the town hall, the local council offices and the post offices, combine to form the civic centre in the area of the original nucleus. With the introduction of vehicular traffic, some roads have been widened, straightened and tarred. The old compound-type of dwelling has been greatly modified, because of the general tendency towards individual family house.

Thus, the old and new urban features are found side by side in most towns in Yorubaland. The present-day Yoruba towns have their former concentric pattern greatly modified by the effect of European contact, which brought about the grafting of new elements to the town, such as the government reservations, shopping centre, railway station, lorry and taxi park, racecourse, golf links, churches, hopsitals and schools, thereby creating two distinct city areas.

It will be seen from this brief outline that the early political history of the Yoruba explains very largely the growth of Yoruba towns. The essential features were: the urban tradition which the Yoruba brought from their probable Near-Eastern origins, and frequent inter-tribal warfare which, encouraged by the slave trade, resulted in constant movements of refugees and the urge for the people to cluster together, in what later became large towns, for the purpose of security.

Thus, it could be seen that the Yoruba have been living in large, dense, permanent towns based on agriculture rather than industry. This pattern is traditional. It may be useful to distinguish between industrial and non-industrial towns rather than say that Yoruba towns are villages simply because they are non-industrial. Despite the absence of industrialization, the Yoruba had cities ever before European penetration and these were based on farming, craft specialization and trading. Even though the Yoruba towns are still mostly non-industrial and lack the type of economic specialization based on power-driven machine, yet they are towns in actual sense of the word.

THE AUTHOR IN THE COMMON-WEALTH*

By

A. NORMAN JEFFARES

THE role of the author in the Commonwealth is, of course, the role of the author anywhere, at any time; he communicates his experience. The Indian critic and novelist, Balachandra Rajan, says about this, 'The artist is a man speaking to other men, more responsible than others, because he is less prepared to compromise with the complexity of his own identity, less willing to surrender the uniqueness of his personal vision to the received formulae of communication. But he is also possessed of a hunger for significance: he is not simply a maker but a maker of meaning, and no act of definition can be enduringly valid for him unless it is also an act of communication, the re-establishing of his identity with others, the rendering of an individual vision without corruption, into a public language.'

The author in the Commonwealth has great advantages. The English language which he uses is very public indeed; it has served great literature and it continues to do so. Another Indian novelist, R. K. Narayan, has remarked, 'English has proved that if a language has flexibility, any experience can be communicated through it.' Although there are obviously in India many languages and many literatures other than English, there is the historical position of English in India as a world language and as the language used by the intellectuals and administrators, which means that the author who uses it can reach an India-wide, as well as a world-wide, audience. This ability of English to reach local and world audiences is true of many countries: think, for example, of Malaysia and in Hong Kong. But because of the diversity of the membership of the Commonwealth, it would be unwise to construct any concept of a single kind of Commonwealth literature. There are indeed as many or more Commonwealth literatures as there are separate societies within the Commonwealth.

The author in the Commonwealth does explore a national identity as well as what we would call, I suppose, his own personal identity. We can distinguish different qualities emerging in different areas. For instance, in Britain, we find writers changing as this society goes through another of its social revolutions. Think of what extraordinary lively drama, whether you like it or not, has swept on to the English stage. Thanks to the B.B.C., to the British Council, and to the record companies, the spoken word is taken more seriously. Through the influence of television we are being moved away from stereotyped patterns in education. Drama is affected, for instance, by the incessant demand of television for plays. The learning of languages has altered through an emphasis of language laboratories, those symbols of new methods of teaching languages. Literary criticism commands a position which it never had before; indeed, if you consider this whole situation, criticism is extremely to the fore as Britain is hauled and pushed into a technological age. There is a great questioning of values and of standards, pressures for efficiency, an emphasis on youth which means there is a good deal of anti-authoritarianism and a general levelling. All of this makes for a good deal of variety and vitality in what we read. The artist is very conscious of his society and his own position in it.

THREE PATTERNS

Similar conditions are occurring throughout the Commonwealth. There are, perhaps, three main patterns within the Commonwealth, leaving aside the United Kingdom. In the older Commonwealth countries—Australia, Canada, New Zealand—there is a great increase in the reading public. This has had an obvious effect on writing. This interest has come out of a slow development from colonial status into nationality. The writer began writing in those countries out of a tradition where you wrote home to tell people of the

* *Culled from* INSIGHT *No.* 18, *October–December*, 1967.

physical surroundings and the conditions of the new country. In the 19th century, for instance, in Australia, we find that Henry Kendall, the poet, described the bush in Australia as though he were Wordsworth writing about the Lake District, rather in the way that the 19th century Australian painters painted it as though they were painting the English scene; it took a long time for them to realize that it was very different in appearance. They, however, had been taught to see it in that particularly English way; their eyes were not trained to a new landscape. These earlier writers in Australia had not acclimatized themselves to their country.

But now if we think of Australian poetry, we find someone like Judith Wright, for instance, who can write about local conditions and ideas without being in any way parochial. She has written brilliantly of her ancestors settling in New South Wales; she has done this in a way which is mature and poised, and which is of interest to people throughout the world. Of the Australian novelists, Patrick White and Randolph Stow, a brilliant man of about thirty-one years of age, are internationally recognized. This international recognition of their status does a great deal to help them to be recognized for their own merits in Australia, where literary criticism is sometimes a little grudging, just a little provincial in the worst sense of the word, inclined to cut the heads off the tall poppies. This international recognition of Australian writers also helps publishers in Australia who are developing so rapidly and are beginning to bring their books to an international market.

In New Zealand, poetry at the moment is full of life and vitality. There are probably two kinds of poets in New Zealand. One comes from the period of the 30's when the New Zealander was writing poetry in order to assess his environment and his history, to represent what made him. There are the other poets, like Louis Johnson, who think that they want to be free of preoccupations with place and time; their detachment is probably built on the work of the other poets. In New Zealand there are enough small presses to print this poetry, and there are people who will buy it and read it discriminatingly. New Zealand proves to us that there is an audience for poetry, that poetry can be sold commercially in small quantities. British publishers might well learn a lot from the example of New Zealand.

In Canada there have recently been excellent public readings by poets. A couple of years ago, Earle Birney, Irving Layton, Phyllis Goetlieb and Leonard Cohen went round together reading to hundreds of people at a time. This was a perhaps surprising demonstration of how interested people were in poetry in Canada. A Literary History of Canada has just been published which indicates the way in which Canada is developing. Canada is very conscious of its history and it is perhaps because it is so sure of its literary values that it is reprinting a vast amount of the early literature. This gives a great deal of strength to the Canadian literary tradition, for if you are a Canadian writer, you have the feeling that you are a part of an established process. Quite often this can help a writer, particularly perhaps after he is about twenty-five.

INDIAN PROBLEMS

The second pattern visible in writing in the Commonwealth is that of the subcontinent of India and Pakistan, and to a certain extent the Far East where, in Malaysia, writing is showing signs of becoming very lively, and where in Hong Kong, Edmund Blunden recently had such a stimulating effect on the writing of young authors when he was there. However, the situation in India and Pakistan is less buoyant. There are obvious difficulties: economics and politics intrude. One cannot have literature anywhere without the effect of economics and politics showing, but one can see this rather clearly in India.

The Indian writer is very conscious of it, because he is regarded quite often in India as a man with a slightly mixed allegiance. Some of us would say that a man with mixed allegiances is just the man needed in modern life—he has a mixed sensibility and he has a very useful role to play. What has the Indian writer to avoid? Partially he has to be very careful not to use idioms which are current elsewhere, which may become unfashionable. A new book called *Writing in India*, a report of a congress held in 1964, demonstrates that the young men are beginning to cast a very cold eye on the writing of their elders. They examine the rather tried metaphors and idioms of some of the older scholars and hold them up to scorn—a situation not without parallel in Britain. There is, for instance, a great change in the Indian poetry written in English from the great affirmations of Tagore or Aurobindo,

to the newer Indian poetry which is sharp and satiric. Dom Moraes or Nissim Ezekial are reacting against older Indian writers, who, after all, brought India to the West as well as a good deal of the West to India.

What is needed in India in general may well be a little more sympathy on the part of the Indian critic for the Indian who is writing in English. There is quite often a temptation on the part of Indian critics to score off their compatriots. In addition to this sympathy, a greater interest might be taken in translation, from the vernaculars into English, from English into the vernaculars. The Indians themselves are doing a good deal in Delhi; our own publishers in Britain—and, I would hope, publishers in other parts of the Commonwealth as well—ought to think of more translations.

Indian writers have a great deal of awareness, of what they are doing. R. K. Narayan, for instance, wrote rather charmingly about his use of English, in which he said: 'We are not attempting to write Anglo-Saxon English. The English language through sheer resilience and mobility is now undergoing a process of Indianization,' and he also said, 'I cannot say whether this process of transmutation is to be reviewed as an enrichment of the English language or a debasement of it. All that I am able to confirm after nearly thirty years of writing is that it has served my purpose admirably of conveying unambiguously the thoughts and acts of a set of personalities who flourish in a small town located in a corner of South India.'

AFRICAN WRITING

The third pattern is in a way the most exciting. It is an extraordinarily accelerative process that we see when we look at writing in Africa today, probably rather akin, if one looks for historical parallel, to the speed with which Greek drama developed from Aeschylus to Sophocles and then to Euripides. It has the same kind of quality about it, the same tempo. Tutuola's novel *The Palm-wine Drinkard* came out in 1952, not a very long time ago. Since then, we have had over a score of novels from West Africa alone, ranging from work which is over-explanatory to the self-conscious (so self-conscious that it reads like something anthropological). However, we also have what is the achievement of it, the realistic, inclusive, vastly impressive novels written by Chinua Achebe. He has espoused what seems to him an adequate revolution: 'To help my country regain its belief in itself and put away the complexes of the years of denigration and self-denigration. And it is essentially a question of education in the best sense of the word. Here I think my aims and the deepest aspirations of my society meet.'

That is probably a very good summary of the impulses which drive many Africans to write, to explore themselves, to record experience, to express political nationalism, and to shape the minds of the generations that come after them, and who will certainly see their image in terms and meanings which these novelists, these playwrights, these poets have been making over the last few years. Achebe has developed enormously. His third novel, *Arrow of God* uses a much larger canvas than *Things Fall Apart*, his earlier book which is perhaps better known. His earlier works dealt with an obvious conflict between Christian and Ibo society, but in *Arrow of God* he takes Ibo Society and examples some of the tensions and quarrels within it. The novel deals basically with a quarrel between two priests which involves a tragic end for one of them. Achebe manages to gain his effects by an effective switching from a proverbial language to his own narrative. Here is a brief passage from it:

'Where is the runner who is in a fever has to run from place to place, he doesn't want to do this but he knows that if he refuses to do this his refusal will be misinterpreted—'He was at once blind and full of sight. He did not see any of the landmarks like the trees and huts but his feet knew where they were going; he did not leave even one small path from the accustomed route. He knew it without the use of eyes. He only stopped once when he smelt light....' Even while people are still talking about the man Rat bit to death, Lizard takes money to have his teeth filed. He who sees an old hag squatting should leave her alone; who knows how she breathes? White Ant chews *igbegulu* because it is lying on the ground; let him climb the palm-tree and chew. He who will swallow *udala* seeds must consider the size of his anus. The fly that has no one to advise him follows the corpse into the ground....

'A fire began to rage inside his chest and to push a dry bitterness up his mouth. But he tasted it from a distance or from a mouth within his mouth. He

felt like tw › separate persons, one running above the other.'

This is an extremely clever and effective technique. It shows Achebe's development as a novelist; he does not need to explain the subject he does not need to justify. The background remains where it ought to be, and against it are enacted situations which are local, and because of the skill of the man, universal as well. This is the measure of his maturity as a novelist. He can be judged and admired not because he is a good African novelist but because, by any standards, he is a good novelist.

NOVEL EXPERIMENTS

There are many other lively novelists in West Africa. It is worth drawing attention to one called Lenric Peters, whose novel, *The Second Round*, deals with what has become a standard theme in African writing—the return of the graduate from overseas. (There is rather a good use of it in Cyprian Ekwensi's book, *People of the City*). But Peters adds to this conflict, the stock one between idealism and the realism of returning home, by putting in a great deal of poetic intensity. His style is full of sympathy, shifts suddenly into satire, and moves from humour into humility. The character emerges from orthodoxy; from dullness and the grotesque, all the curious ingredients of life are there. It is very effective, it shows that dimensions of an established theme in a novel can be extended very well.

There is a lot of experiment going on in African writing in the novel. Gabriel Okara, for instance, is translating Ijaw into English. Nkem Nwanko is doing it with Ibo. Their work is only partially successful but it is impressive that they should feel so self-confident that they can adventure into this particular problem.

There is perhaps even more vitality among the playwrights than among the novelists. John Pepper Clark, bursting with vitality, is not such a good playwright as Soyinka, whose plays have been performed in London in several theatres, a man who has a great sense of dramatic situation, whose dialogue can be sharp and incisive. He also has a great sense of satire, which he pops into his plays at just the right point to give them their sharp comment on life. He is a great dramatist in the making.

West African poetry, again, shows this great search to discover what the African is; quite often it makes use of folk material along with the formality of English verse. In Nigeria, Christopher Okigbo is very good at this. Abioseh Nicol is another; he writes:

You are not a Country, Africa;
You are a concept;
Fashioned in our minds, each to each
To hide our separate fears;
To dream our separate dreams.

There is another problem of categorization when we consider West Indian writing. This is difficult because the West Indian writer has found his publishers in London for a very long time; he has often written for an English audience as well as his own; there has been a movement on his part to trace his relationship to Africa, to the possible African background of the West Indies. When you read the West Indians from outside, you usually want to go and see the place to which you have been brought by the writer; you want to know more about its life. Reading Naipaul's *The Mystic Masseur*, makes you want to know more about the curious practices he describes; you find, in the poetry of Walcott, things which stimulate you, which make you curious. This is one of the great successes of the West Indian writer. Similarly, anyone who hear a Soyinka play, wants to go and see an African village where people can still enjoy rhetoric and will behave like the people in the play.

How can this role of the author be helped for this exploration of society? The author is obviously a man who is sensitive to what is happening in our midst; it is his word that will last and interpret to people after us, as it does to us ourselves. In the Commonwealth, we have a unique vehicle for the communication of ideas in English, a language made subtle, flexible and effective over the centuries. We also have the background of English literature which most of these writers have been brought up upon.

FUTURE NEEDS

We have to try to keep the language homogenous enough so that when someone writes in one part of the Commonwealth he retains his audience in another and so that the language will not become too local in its forms. We do need, however, local colour, and this is what Commonwealth writing is bringing into the general stock of English literature; a wider vocabulary, wider nuances, wider idioms, all kinds of new modes of

expression. We want this newness, this particularity, to be shared; we do not want our communications to break down. This means, then, good language teaching as a basis, so that the vast audience can remain one audience. Then we want the functions of the critics and translators carried out in collaboration with publishers. On the whole, English publishers have been very helpful to Commonwealth writers and have done a lot to encourage them. They can do still more. They are already doing more by training local publishers and this is going to have an effect on the provision of outlets for writers throughout the Commonwealth. And this, after all, is what the writers themselves want above all else.

Universities—those modern maids-of-all-work—can help. They can provide courses in Commonwealth literature; they can train postgraduates so that staff and students can take a panoptic view of what is going on and develop a kind of intra-Commonwealth view. When we had a conference on Commonwealth literature in Leeds in 1964, it was fascinating to see the writers suddenly discovering that problems in Alberta were not really so very different from those in Uganda. There were some obvious differences, but the writers found they had a surprising amount in common. This was extraordinarily useful, for it shows that the writers worked in a much bigger community than they had perhaps fully realized before. But to achieve such a point of view with the tolerance and inclusiveness implied in it is not easy.

LIBRARIES WANTED

The Association of Commonwealth Literature and Language Studies was set up last year in the hope that perhaps we might be able to help in a little way throughout the Commonwealth. We have, in fact, to persuade people in governments and in foundations, that money is needed for the support of Commonwealth literature, that we need, particularly, to provide for libraries.

We also need to have travel facilities and funds for scholars so that they can meet each other, so that they can go to the places where literature is written in Commonwealth, can see writers in their own background, and listen to criticism of them by their fellows. It is always interesting to see where they have come from and how the society which they describe, works. We should do more to make the subject known, and if we do not do it in the Commonwealth there are plenty of people outside the Commonwealth who are only too eager to do so. The American universities are multiplying courses in the subject and multiplying their library holdings; we have had a visitor from Texas recently, who is making a vast catalogue of the holdings of Commonwealth literature, and drawing upon this Library's record to do so. Should we in this country give up our instinctive sympathy and understanding in this field? We should be aware that we have responsibilities for our own writers and that we can say, within the broad inclusive sense, that we all share a common heritage in the Commonwealth.

We need, above all else, critics able to distinguish between good writing and bad, so that they can distinguish between a singular local book and one which is universal in its implications. We need to know more about the complexities that go to make up Commonwealth literature as they go to make up the Commonwealth. All of us throughout the Commonwealth ought to be more critically and historically aware how much all these writers and their countries give to the British tradition which has in part contributed to the way they themselves regard life and the people among whom they live it.

Poems

VOICE OF THE ORACLE

The Sun did hide its glimmering rays,
The rain withheld its tearful showers,
Gale and thunder reigned supreme,
And the land was wrapped in darkness!

The aged were worried,
The young were trembling.
Fearfully but hurriedly
The brave dashed to the Oracle
For help to solve the mystery
That was crippling the land.

The gods were invoked,
And thus spoke the Oracle:
'The Nation is guilty
Of greed,
Of injustice,
Of corruption,
Of nepotism,
Of thirst for naked power;

For these,
The Nation,
Very dearly will pay
With their houses
And their cattle—
Their entire wealth,
And their blood;
B–U–T
After the darkness,
The Sun,
Once more will come
With brighter rays
And happier days.'

BABATUNDE MUSTAPHA

SILENCE

Silence is the plane of light,
Whereon God rules in all His might
Defeating human wiles and whims,
Mysticism.
Charging thoughts on mental waves
Which as purposed must behave
Casting silence over head
By whom it's sped.
This trillion tonful of earth's
Bearing three thousand million births
Of human specie is dead silent,
On its movement.
Silent is the conception,
Before the soul's personation
Silent appear the grave also,
And so the Soul.

J. O. IMONA-RUSSEL

NOT BY BREAD ALONE

Man lives,
Not by bread alone
But by giving
A little thought
To the lives of others.

Not by bread alone,
But by manly fights
Against the acts
That plague the conscience.

Not by bread alone,
But by developing muscles
To absorb the shocks of life
Without a word for suicide.

Man lives
Not by bread alone,
But by striking a balance
'tween the Head and the Heart,
And to say 'NO'
When occasion demands.

BABATUNDE MUSTAPHA

NIGERIAN MEMORIES

Majestically the Niger and the Benue
Flow towards each other and the sea.
Overhead the circling vultures
Can see the beginnings of the desert to the North
And in the East the shallow giant lake.

Here on the earth feet stamp
In joyous rhythmic dancing.
Laughter and gaiety mingle
With stately pomp and courtesy,
Ignoring for the time the poverty of the villages.

Kind hearts and smiling faces,
Arguments, shouting and noise;
Noise of blaring transistors;
Noise of ceaseless car horns;
Noise of people; noise of drums.

Unmindful of the noise the patient, quiet cattle
Pass on their long wanderings.
An old man kneels in the red dust of the road,
Calling out greetings to a horseman.
A large car hoots past,
Swirling red plumes of laterite at its heels.

Inside a large, fat, richly robed rascal
Lolls back on embroidered cushions
Well pleased with life and himself.
He hears the drumming as his car
Whisks him through the village
Where the market is busy, crowded.

The small barefooted boy,
School-books in attache case atop his head,
Hears it too and hurries home.

IAN MAYO-SMITH

ODE TO FREEDOM

O red dynamic soldier
You bind imbecile pride
And draw him to your side.
Trusted and matchless soldier
You tone dividual need
Your Nation's wheel to speed.
Your walk alike is running,
You pace patiently well,
For good, results do tell.
Your star is not your virtue
Nor do men, imperson you,
Your make is divine Will.
O red availing soldier
In true, arms, sword and shield
You can win Duties field.
Duty, can't elude you,
She's one lass you can woo,
Ay Free! you are the groom.

J. O. IMONA-RUSSEL

CONTRIBUTORS

Mrs E. Okesola, the writer of *The Agbo Festival,* is a producer of the children's programme—Play Time—on the Nigerian Television Service, Victoria Island, Lagos. **Mr Adeogun,** who writes on *African Art in Epe,* is a temporary Ethnographer in the Department of Antiquities working in the Nigerian Museum. **Dr R. A. Akinola,** the author of *Urban Tradition in Yorubaland* is a Senior Lecturer in Geography at the University of Lagos whose special field is Urban Geography.

ship by nigerline

NIGERIAN NATIONAL SHIPPING LINE

21 Wharf Road Apapa

Ship direct to:
Europe,
Continent,
Mediterranean and
West Africa.

NIGERIAN

PORTS

AUTHORITY

an autonomous Corporation for Public Service

Head Office: **26/28 MARINA, LAGOS**
Telegrams: **GENPORTS LAGOS**

PROVIDES

modern installations
equipment and efficient
services to handle
your goods at Nigerian ports

CATERS for:

Ship repairs
pilotage
towage
buoyage and survey

For full particulars apply :

GENERAL MANAGER

PRIVATE MAIL BAG 12588, LAGOS

THE WEST AFRICAN ENGINEERING COMPANY (NIGERIA) LIMITED

30, WHARF ROAD, P. O. BOX 338, APAPA. TELEPHONE 55368, 55061.
13, ABA ROAD, P. O. BOX 595, PORT HARCOURT. TELEPHONE 21200.

ELECTRICAL WHOLESALERS

Stockists of:

*CONDUIT and accessories $\frac{3}{4}$″ to 2″

*CABLES conductors, winding wires in all sizes and types

*SWITCHGEAR and FUSEGEAR 5 Amp to 800 Amp

*MINIATURE CIRCUIT BREAKERS, Distribution boards, consumers' units

*EARTH LEAKAGE CIRCUIT BREAKERS

*ELECTRICAL ACCESSORIES for any type of installation

*LAMPS 15 watt to 1500 watt, and FLUORESCENT TUBES
*LIGHTING FITTINGS AND FLOODLIGHTS

*ELECTRIC MOTORS and STARTERS up to 30 h.p.

*MEGGERS, AVOMETERS, Instruments and Testers
*BELLS, BUZZERS, INDICATORS

*MAINS CLOCKS
*INSULATING MATERIALS

*B.L.P LIGHTNING PREVENTORS

if it's Steel look for the name JAMMAL

Builders of:

Truck Bodies Bulk Liquid Transporters
Refrigerated Railway Wagons Storage Tanks
Pontoons Aircraft Hangers Airport Terminal
Buildings Cinemas Residential Flats
Showrooms & Warehouses Workshops & Garages
Petrol Stations Fire Stations

JAMMAL STEEL STRUCTURES LTD
235/237 APAPA ROAD, IJORA, P.O. BOX 435, LAGOS.

Head Office:

12, BROAD STREET
P.M.B. 2276,
Phone: 26681,
LAGOS

Branches:

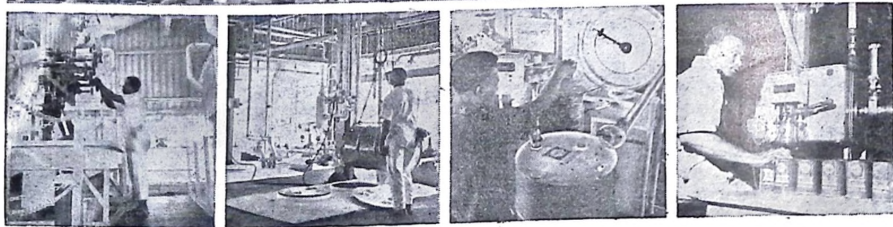
IBADAN, AKURE,
BENIN, ENUGU,
PORT HARCOURT,
KADUNA, KANO, JOS.

AFRICAN ALLIANCE INSURANCE CO., LTD.

For Future Security through Life Assurance

KEEPING PACE WITH DEVELOPMENT

SHELL



To keep in step with a rapidly expanding Nigeria — Shell have built this Lubricating Oil Blending Plant at Apapa — the first in West Africa. At a cost of £210,000 it blends six basic oil grades, with various additives, into 32 different grades of lubricating oils.

YOU CAN BE SURE OF